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PAPA BOUCHARD

By Molly Elliot Seawell

ON a certain day in June, 1900, a cataclysm occurred in the quiet apartment of Mademoiselle Céleste Bouchard, in the Rue Clarisse, the quietest street in the quietest part of Paris. This cataclysm consisted of the simultaneous departure, or rather the levanting, of the entire masculine element in the excellent old lady's household. And this masculine element had been so admirably trained! Monsieur Paul Bouchard, in particular, ten years his sister's junior, was reckoned a model man. Mademoiselle could truly say that during his fifty-four years of life he had never, until then, given her a moment's anxiety. All the elderly ladies of the Bouchards' acquaintance pointed with admiration to Monsieur Paul.

"Look!" they said, "such a good brother! Mademoiselle boasts that although he is fifty-four years of age he is still as obedient to her as he was at fifteen. So prosperous and respected as an advocate, too!" And all these ladies sighed because they had not succeeded in petticoating a brother or a husband as Mademoiselle Bouchard had petticoated the prosperous and respected Monsieur Paul Bouchard.

Pierre, the husband of Élise, Mademoiselle Bouchard's maid for thirty years, was as well disciplined as his master, for he was Monsieur Paul's valet. He had never had a will of his own since the day, thirty years before, when Élise had sworn before the altar to love, honor and obey him.

The third masculine creature in the dovecote of the Rue Clarisse was the parrot, Pierrot. Nobody knew exactly how old Pierrot was, but he was sup-

posed to have arrived at years of discretion. Mademoiselle had spent a dozen patient years in curing Pierrot of a propensity to bad language, and had taught him a great variety of moral maxims that made him a model bird, as Monsieur Bouchard was a model man and Pierre a model servant. It is true that Léontine de Meneval, Monsieur Paul's ward, married to a handsome scapegrace captain of artillery, had amused herself with teaching the bird a number of phrases, such as "Bad boy Bouchard" and others reflecting on "Papa Bouchard," as she called him. And Pierrot had picked up these naughty expressions with astonishing quickness. But Léontine had always been regarded as incorrigible by her guardian and his sister, although they really loved her, and since her marriage she had become gayer, merrier and more irresponsible than ever. This deterioration both Monsieur and Mademoiselle Bouchard laid at the door of her husband, Captain de Meneval, with his laughing eyes and devil-may-care manner; with whom, however, aside from these characteristics, not the slightest fault could be found. He was devoted to Léontine, and if the two chose to lead a life as merry and unreflecting as that of the birds in the shadowy forests, nobody could stop them. Papa Bouchard—as the artillery captain had the impudence to call him—did, it is true, keep a tight hand on Léontine's fortune, and would allow her only half her income, at which Léontine grumbled and incited Captain de Meneval to grumble, too. But Papa Bouchard, having full power as trustee, met their complaints and protests with a propo-

sition to cut down their allowance to one-fourth of their income, at which the two young people grew frightened and desisted.

Now, there dwells in every masculine breast a germ of lawlessness that no discipline ever invented can wholly kill. Man or parrot, it is the same. After having been brought up in the way he should go, he longs to go it. Such was the case with Pierrot, with Pierre and with Monsieur Bouchard.

It was the bird that first made a dash for liberty. After ten years of irreproachable conduct, Pierrot, on that June morning, suddenly jumped from the balcony, where he had been walking the railing in the most sedate manner, and scurried off in the direction of the Folies Bergères, the Moulin Rouge, and the very gayest quarter of Paris.

Monsieur Bouchard was sitting on the balcony at the time. He was rather younger looking, with his clean-shaven face and wiry figure, than most men of his age, but thanks to Mademoiselle Céleste, he patronized the same tailors that had made for his father and his grandfather. Their cut and style indicated that they had been tailors to Cardinal Richelieu and others of that time, and they dressed Monsieur Bouchard in coats and trousers and waistcoats of the pliocene age of tailoring. As for his hats, they might have been dug out of Pompeii for any modernity they had, and the result was that Monsieur Bouchard's back and legs looked about seventy-five, while his face looked little more than forty.

Instead of giving the alarm when Pierrot trotted gaily off, Monsieur Bouchard felt a strange thrill of sympathy with the runaway.

"Poor devil!" thought he. "No doubt he is sick of the Rue Clarisse—tired of the moral maxims—wearied of the whole business. He isn't so young as he was, but there's a good deal of life in him still—" Pierrot was just scampering round the corner—"and he wants to see life."

"There is a psychologic moment for everything," so Otto von Bis-

marck said. The parrot's escape made a psychologic moment for Monsieur Bouchard, and quietly putting on his hat, and telling Mademoiselle Bouchard that he was going to a meeting of the Society of French Antiquarians at St. Germain, and afterward for a stroll through the museum in the town, made straight for a street in the neighborhood of the Champs Elysées. He remembered seeing in that quarter a handsome new apartment house lately finished and thoroughly modern. He had for curiosity's sake entered it. He had seen furnished apartments so bright, so light, so cheery, so merry that he longed to establish himself there. He had gone back once, twice, thrice, each time more infatuated with the place. To-day he walked in, selected a vacant apartment, and in ten minutes had taken a lease of it for a year.

And then he had to go back to the Rue Clarisse to tell about it.

Of course, he had not thrown off the yoke of thirty years without secret alarms, agitations and palpitations. He walked up and down the Rue Clarisse twice, his heart thumping loudly against his ribs, before he could screw up resolution to enter. He was nerved, however, by the recollection of the apartment he had just seen. It had been given up the day before by a young journalist, who had left various souvenirs of a very pleasant life there. The street was such a bustling, noisy street—and the Rue Clarisse was so quiet, so quiet! In the new street there were two music halls in full view and generally in full blast, gay restaurants blazing with lights, where all sorts of delicious, indigestible things to eat were to be had, and such an atmosphere of jollity and movement! Monsieur Bouchard quivered with delight like a schoolboy as he thought of it, and so he marched in to take his life in his hand while breaking the news to his sister Céleste.

Mademoiselle Bouchard, a small, prim, devoted, affectionate, obstinate creature, was sitting in the drawing-room, bemoaning with Élise the loss

of Pierrot. Élise, a hard-featured, hard-working creature, had such a profound contempt for the other sex that it was a wonder she ever brought herself to marry one of them. She was saying to Mademoiselle Bouchard:

"Depend on it, Mademoiselle, that ungrateful Pierrot will never come back of his own accord. If he had been a she-bird, now—but Pierrot is like the rest of his sex. It's in them to run away, and run away they will."

"He has had a quiet, peaceful home in the Rue Clarisse for seventeen years," wailed poor Mademoiselle Bouchard.

"That's reason enough for him to run away. What does he care about a quiet, peaceful home? He wants to be strutting around in some restaurant, drinking and swearing and turning night into day. They're all like that. My Pierre, now, is just as ready to run away as was Pierrot, but I shall keep an eye on *him*."

And then Monsieur Bouchard walked in, with an affectation of ease and debonairness, and told about the apartment near the Champs Élysées, whereat it seemed to poor Mademoiselle Céleste as if the Louvre had moved itself over into the Bois de Boulogne and the Seine had suddenly begun to flow backward. Of course, Monsieur Bouchard had arranged a plausible tale by which his hegira was to appear the most natural and laudable thing in the world. Most men are inventive enough in the matter of personal justification. But it is one thing to make up and tell a plausible tale, and another to get that tale believed. Élise openly sniffed at the theory advanced by Monsieur Bouchard that it was absolutely necessary for him to live nearer the courts. Also, that he was really inspired by a desire to save Mademoiselle the annoyance of clients coming and going.

"You remember, my dear Céleste, you complained of Captain de Meneval the last time he was here. You said he talked and laughed so

much, and chucked Élise under the chin——"

"But that was a trifle; you know there's no real harm done," protested Mademoiselle Bouchard.

"Why? Because I won't let him," said Monsieur Bouchard, with the determined air a man assumes when he wishes to impress a woman with a great notion of the power he holds over another man. "It is because he has to deal with *me*—a man born with his shirt on, as the peasants say. Otherwise there might be harm done. De Meneval is very saucy. When I reminded him the other day of the promise I exacted from him when he married Léontine, that he wouldn't go into debt, the fellow grinned and said he was in love with Léontine, and would have promised to eat his grandmother if I had made that a condition."

"But in reference to this strange notion of yours about taking an apartment at your time of life——"

"That's just it, my dear," cried Monsieur Bouchard. "I am too old *not* to have a separate establishment."

"Too old!" cried Mademoiselle, who had never ceased to regard the model Monsieur Bouchard as a wild sprig of flamboyant youth; "you mean too young!"

Monsieur Bouchard was tickled. What gentleman of fifty-four is not pleased at the assumption that he is merely a colt, after all?

Mademoiselle Bouchard anxiously scrutinized her brother. There was a lawless gleam in his eye—an indefinable something that is revealed when a man has the bit between his teeth and does not mean to let it go. Mademoiselle, good, innocent soul, was not devoid of sense, and she saw her only game was to play for time.

"Very well, Paul. If you *will* desert the Rue Clarisse, I will look about and get you an apartment near by, and I will let you have Pierre——"

"Oh, no, no!" cried Monsieur Bouchard, hastily. He had no mind to have a domestic Vidocq in his new quarters. "I couldn't think of robbing you of Pierre. Thirty years you

have had him. You could not get on without him."

"Yes, I could."

"I can't accept the sacrifice."

"I make it cheerfully for your sake."

"It would be cruel to Pierre."

"He will make the sacrifice."

"That he will," interrupted Élise, with the freedom of an old servant. "He will caper at the notion of leaving the Rue Clarisse for some wild, dissipated place such as Monsieur Paul has selected."

"Monsieur Paul has not selected a place, Élise," replied Mademoiselle, with severity.

"But—but I have, my dear Céleste. It is No. 25 Rue Bassano. I have taken it for a year. In fact, the van is coming to-day for my personal belongings. Pierre will see to them. And, my dear, I have a busy day before me. I am due at the meeting of the Society of French Antiquarians at St. Germain at one o'clock, and I can barely make the train. Afterward I shall spend some instructive hours in the museum—I shall see you to-morrow—" and Monsieur Bouchard literally ran out of the room.

"There he goes!" apostrophized Élise to Mademoiselle Céleste, who was almost in tears. "That's the way Pierrot scampered off, and Pierre wants only half a wink to run off, too, to the Rue Bassano."

"Élise," cried Mademoiselle, "you are most unjust, and your suspicions of Pierre will be disproved. Ring the bell."

Pierre appeared.

He was about Monsieur Bouchard's age, height and size—medium in all respects—clean shaven, like his master, and wore a cast-off suit of Monsieur Bouchard's, as it was the morning and his livery was religiously saved for the afternoon. He was, in short, a very good imitation of Monsieur Bouchard.

Mademoiselle Bouchard stated the case to him, carefully giving Monsieur Paul's bogus reasons.

"The Rue Bassano is a very gay and noisy place, Pierre, as you know,

with a great many theatres and restaurants about, and much passing to and fro. It will be a change from the Rue Clarisse."

"Mademoiselle, I know it," Pierre replied, showing the whites of his eyes. "I would much rather remain in this decent, quiet street."

Mademoiselle turned to Élise with an I-told-you-so air, and said, "No doubt you would, Pierre—a man of your excellent character."

"Yes, Mademoiselle. The theatres and music halls must be very objectionable—and the restaurants. I suppose the waiters would laugh at me when I went to fetch Monsieur's dinner of boiled mutton and rice."

"Yes; but if it were your duty to go with Monsieur?"

"Duty, Mademoiselle, has ever been a sacred word with me. Though but a servant, I have always revered my duty," replied the virtuous Pierre. He backed and filled for some time longer, as servants commonly do—and as some of their masters and mistresses do sometimes—but finally, in response to Mademoiselle Bouchard's pleading that he would not desert Monsieur Bouchard at this critical moment in his career, consented to brave the dangers of the gay Rue Bassano. But when Mademoiselle hinted at the horrid possibility that Monsieur Bouchard might be beguiled into sowing a late crop of wild oats in the Rue Bassano, suddenly a grin flashed for a moment on Pierre's stolid countenance—flashed and disappeared so instantly that Mademoiselle Bouchard was not sure he grinned at all. If he did, however, it must have been at the notion that the staid, the correct Monsieur Bouchard could ever sow wild oats. Mademoiselle Céleste blushed faintly at the thought that she reckoned such a thing possible.

Pierre then backed out of the door, wiping two imaginary tears from his eyes. Once outside with the door shut, this miscreant did a very strange thing. He stood on one leg, whirled around with the greatest agility for his years, and softly whispered, "Houp-la!"

That very day came the moving. The van arrived, and Monsieur Bouchard's books, papers and clothes were put into it by Pierre, who seemed to be in the deepest dejection. Mademoiselle gave him minute and tearful directions about Monsieur Paul's diet, exercise and clothing. He was to see that Monsieur Paul kept regular hours, and was to report in the Rue Clarisse the smallest infraction of the rules of living which might occur in the Rue Bassano, and Pierre promised with a fervor and glibness that would have excited the suspicions of anyone less kindly and simple-minded than good old Mademoiselle. He did indeed awaken a host of doubts in the mind of his faithful Elise, who had not been married for thirty years without finding out a few things about men. And when he wept at telling her good-bye for a single day, she told him not to be shedding any of those crocodile tears around her.

Pierre, mounted on the van that carried away Monsieur Bouchard's belongings, drove off, looking as melancholy as he could; but as soon as he turned the corner he began whistling so merrily that the driver asked him if his uncle hadn't died and left him some money.

When the Rue Bassano was reached Pierre jumped down and skipped up stairs with the agility of twenty instead of fifty. He was as charmed with Monsieur's new apartment as Monsieur himself had been. It was so intensely modern. Light everywhere—all sorts of new-fashioned conveniences—nothing in the least like the dismal old Rue Clarisse. And the view from the windows—so very gay! And the noise—so delicious, so intoxicatingly interesting! Pierre could not refrain from hanging out of the window about half the time he was supposed to be at work. He whistled, sang, and even danced in the exuberance of his delight. The last tenant—a very jolly young journalist—had left, as Monsieur Bouchard had noted, some souvenirs on the walls in the shape of gaudy posters and brilliant chromos of ballet girls.

These Pierre might be expected to remove when he began to hang on the walls the severely classic pictures that constituted Monsieur Bouchard's collection of art. But Pierre seemed to know by clairvoyance Monsieur Bouchard's latent tastes. He hung "The Coliseum by Moonlight"—a very fine etching—immediately under a red-and-gold young lady who was making a quarter of six with her dainty, uplifted toe. "Socrates and His Pupils" were put where they could get an admirable view of another red-and-gold young lady who was making six o'clock precisely. "Kittens at Play"—a great favorite of Mademoiselle's—was side by side with a picture of Courier, who won the Grand Prix that year, and a very noble portrait of President Loubet was placed next a cut of a celebrated English prize fighter, stripped for the ring. The remainder of the things were neatly arranged; the *concierge*, who was to supply Monsieur Bouchard's meals, was interviewed, and an appetizing dinner ordered. Then Pierre, taking possession of the evening newspaper and also of a very comfortable chair by the window, awaited Monsieur Bouchard's arrival.

It was a charming evening in the middle of June, and still broad daylight at seven o'clock. But Pierre, presently lighting a lamp and drawing the shades, gave the apartment a homelike and inviting aspect.

Just as the clock struck seven Monsieur Bouchard's step was heard on the stair. Seven o'clock had been Monsieur Bouchard's hour of coming home since he was fifteen years old, and he had never varied from it three minutes in thirty-seven years. He entered the drawing-room with a new and jovial air, but when he saw Pierre his countenance turned as black as a thundercloud.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, curtly.

"I came, Monsieur, by Mademoiselle's orders," civilly replied Pierre.

"Mademoiselle's orders" was still a phrase to conjure by with Monsieur Bouchard. When the yoke of forty

years is thrown off there is still a feeling as if it were bearing on the neck. Monsieur Bouchard crossly threw his gloves on the table and asked for his dinner.

"It will be here in five minutes, Monsieur," replied Pierre. "Will not Monsieur look about the apartment and see if I have arranged things to suit him? The pictures, for example?"

Monsieur, still sulky, rose, and the first thing his eye fell on was the prize fighter's portrait under President Loubet's.

"This is intolerable!" he said, indignantly. "Why didn't you take this prize-fighting daub down?"

"Because," readily responded Pierre, "the place where it was would be marked on the wall; and besides, I did not like to take the liberty without Monsieur's permission."

Monsieur Bouchard passed on to the next picture, that of the hero of the Grand Prix. He liked horses—in pictures, that is—and really found Courier more to his taste than "Kittens at Play." His countenance cleared, and when Pierre gravely directed him to the young lady poised on one toe and reaching skyward with the other, a faint smile actually appeared on Monsieur Bouchard's face. Then, his eye falling on the other young lady who was making six o'clock, every wrinkle on his forehead smoothed out, his mouth came open like a rat trap, and he involuntarily assumed an attitude of pleased contemplation, with his hands under his coat tails.

Suddenly, however, it flashed on him that Mademoiselle Bouchard's paid detective, in the person of Pierre, was eyeing him, and with the quickness of thought Monsieur Bouchard's appreciative smile gave way to a portentous frown, and turning to Pierre, he said, sternly:

"Take this thing away! It is reprehensible both in art and morals! I can't have it here!"

But, wonder of wonders! there stood Pierre, his mouth wide open in a silent guffaw, his left eye nearly

closed. Was it possible that he was daring to wink at his master? Pierre, however, pretty soon solved the situation by putting his finger on the side of his nose—a shocking familiarity—and saying, roguishly:

"Ah, sir, I have something to say to you. I was forced, yes, actually driven, from the decorous quiet of the Rue Clarisse and the company of Mademoiselle Bouchard and my worthy Élise and the cats, to this gay locality by my solicitude for Monsieur. That is to say, Mademoiselle thinks I was. One thing is certain—I was sent here to take care of Monsieur. Well, it depends entirely on Monsieur how I take care of him. Do you understand, sir?"

"N—n—not exactly." Monsieur Bouchard was a little frightened. Having Pierre to mount guard over him seemed destructive of the harmless liberty and mild gaiety he had promised himself in the Rue Bassano.

"Just this, sir. My wife, I have reason to know, expects Monsieur to watch me and report to her. Mademoiselle expects me to watch Monsieur and report to *her*. Now, what prevents us from each giving a good account of the other, and meanwhile doing as we please?"

Monsieur for a moment looked indignant at this impudent proposition, coming, too, as it did, from a servant whom he had known as the pattern of decorum for thirty years. But only for a moment. Was it strange, after all, that thirty years of the Rue Clarisse had bred a spirit of revolt in this hitherto obedient husband and submissive servant?

Pierre, seeing evidences of yielding on the part of Monsieur, proceeded to clinch the matter.

"You see, sir, I found out you were looking at this apartment. If I had told Mademoiselle what I knew about it there'd have been a pretty kettle of fish. I doubt if Monsieur would have got away from the Rue Clarisse alive. But I didn't. I concluded the Rue Bassano was a very pleasant place to live in. I like the lively tunes they play at the music

hall across the street, and that theatre round the corner is convenient. So I kept as dumb as an oyster, and here we are, sir, and if we don't have a livelier time here than we did in the Rue Clarisse it will be Monsieur's fault, not mine."

Monsieur met this outrageous speech by saying, "You are the most impudent, scandalous, scheming, hypocritical rascal I ever met——"

Pierre just then heard sounds in the little lobby which he understood. He ran out and returned with a tray, which he placed on the table, already laid for one. Then, arranging the dishes with a great flourish, he invited Monsieur Bouchard to take his place at the table. Monsieur complied. The first course was oysters—at three francs the dozen. Then there was turtle soup; duckling *à la Bordelaise*, deviled lobster—both of which were forbidden in the Rue Clarisse, because Monsieur Bouchard at the age of seven had been made ill by them—and a bottle of champagne, a wine that Mademoiselle had always told her brother was poison to every member of his family.

But Monsieur Bouchard seemed to forget all about this. He ate and drank these things as if he had forgotten all his painful experiences of forty-five years before and as if he had been brought up on champagne.

It was rather pleasant—this first quaff of liberty—having what he liked to eat and drink, and even to wear. He privately determined before finishing his dinner that he would get a new tailor next day and have some clothes made in the latest fashion.

"Have you found out the names of any persons in the house?" asked Monsieur after dinner, lighting a cigar. It was his second; in the Rue Clarisse he was limited to one.

"No one at all, sir," replied that double-dyed villain, Pierre. "It isn't judicious to know all sorts of people. I intend to forget some I know."

Monsieur Bouchard turned in his chair and looked at Pierre; the fellow really seemed changed into another

man from what he had been for thirty years. But to Monsieur Bouchard the change was not displeasing. He felt a bond between himself and Pierre, stronger in the last half-hour than in the thirty years they had been master and man. They exchanged looks—it might even be said winks—and Monsieur Bouchard poured out another glass of champagne—his third. And when dinner was over he was in that state of exhilaration which the sense of liberty newly acquired always brings.

"Monsieur won't want me any more to-night?" asked Pierre.

"No," replied Monsieur Bouchard, "but be sure to be here at—" he meant to say at ten o'clock that night, but changed his mind and said, "seven o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Certainly, sir," answered Pierre. "I expect to be home and in bed before three."

And he said this with such a debonair manner that Monsieur Bouchard was secretly charmed, and privately determined to acquire something of the same tone.

Pierre gone, Monsieur Bouchard made himself comfortable in an easy-chair and began toying with a fourth cigar. How agreeable were these modern apartments, after all!—everything furnished, every want anticipated—all a tenant had to do was to walk in and hang up his hat. Then his thoughts wandered to that very pretty woman who had traveled in the same train with him that day to St. Germain, and the day before to Verneuil, whither he had gone to look after some property of Léontine's. Madame Vernet was her name—it was on her traveling bag—and she was a widow—that much had leaked out ten seconds after he met her. But she was so very demure, so modest, not to say bashful, that she seemed more like a nun than a widow. And so timid—everything frightened her. She trembled when the guard asked her for her ticket, and clung quite desperately to Monsieur Bouchard's arm in the station at Verneuil. She had expected her aunt and uncle to

meet her, and when they were not to be found, blushing accepted Monsieur Bouchard's services in getting a cab. And that day, on stepping into the railway carriage to go to St. Germain, there was the dear little diffident thing again. She was charmed to see her friend of the day before, and explained that she was to spend the day with another uncle and aunt she had living at St. Germain. Knowing her inability to care for herself in a crowd, Monsieur Bouchard had meant to put her into a cab, as he had done the day before. But just as the train stopped he was seized by a couple of snuffy old antiquarians and hustled off by them before he could even offer to take charge of the quiet, the retiring, the clinging and helpless Madame Vernet.

Monsieur Bouchard lay back in his chair recalling her prim but pretty gray gown, her fleecy veil of gray gauze, that covered but did not conceal her charming features, and her extremely natty boots. He could not for the life of him remember whether he had mentioned to her on their first meeting that he was going to St. Germain next day. While he was cogitating this point he was rudely disturbed by the opening of the door, and Captain de Meneval walked in briskly.

Now this good-looking captain of artillery, who had married Monsieur Bouchard's ward, Léontine, was not exactly to Monsieur's taste. It is true he had never been able to find out anything to de Meneval's discredit—and he had looked pretty closely into the captain's affairs at the time of Léontine's marriage. As for Léontine herself, she was devoted to her captain and always represented him as being the kindest as well as the most agreeable of husbands. True, he was always complaining about the modest income that Papa Bouchard allowed them, but Léontine herself was ever doing that, and urged de Meneval on in his complaints. Monsieur Bouchard was a little annoyed at de Meneval's entrance, especially as the artillery captain had adopted a hail-fellow-well-met air, highly objectionable on

the part of a man toward another man who practically holds the purse-strings for number one.

Therefore, Monsieur Bouchard rather stiffly gave Captain de Meneval three fingers and offered him a chair.

"Changed your quarters, eh?" said de Meneval, looking about him. "Found the Rue Clarisse rather slow, and came off here where you can be your own man, so to speak?"

"I was not actuated by any such motive," coldly replied Monsieur Bouchard. "I came here because the rooms I had in the Rue Clarisse were cramped, and I needed to have more room, as well as to be in a more convenient quarter of Paris."

De Meneval's bright eyes had been traveling round the walls, and Monsieur Bouchard remembered, with cold chills running up and down his back, his predecessor's pictures so indiscreetly left hanging by Pierre. A shout of laughter from de Meneval, and a pointing of his stick toward the red-and-gold young ladies, showed Monsieur Bouchard that his apprehensions were not unfounded.

"Is that your selection, Papa Bouchard?" cried the reprobate captain. "Never saw them before—you must have kept them in hiding in the Rue Clarisse. I'll tell Léontine," and the captain laughed loudly.

He had a great haw-haw of a laugh that had always been particularly annoying to Monsieur Bouchard, and this thing of calling him "Papa" Bouchard was an unwarrantable liberty. So he replied, freezingly:

"You are altogether mistaken. These extraordinary prints were left here by my predecessor, a scampish fellow named Marsac, a person of sporting tastes, like most of the modern young men, and they will come down to-morrow. It would seriously disturb me to have those ballet pictures around."

"Well, now," said de Meneval, with an unabashed front, "I think you are too hard on the poor girls. I have known a good many of them in my life—taken them to little suppers, you know—and generally they're very hard-working, decent girls."

Some of them have a husband and children to help to support. Others have dependent parents. They're unconventional—very—and like to eat and drink at somebody else's expense, but that's no great harm. Plenty of other people in much higher walks of life do the same."

"I don't care to discuss ballet girls with you, Monsieur de Meneval," remarked Monsieur Bouchard, with great dignity.

"But I want to discuss them with *you*," answered de Meneval, with what Monsieur Bouchard thought most improper levity and familiarity. "That's what I came to you this evening about. That's why I have been haunting the Rue Clarisse during the last ten days, trying to see you alone."

"Yes. I know that I have been honored with a good many cards of yours. Also of Léontine's."

"Oh, Léontine! You may be sure she does not come on the errand that brings me. While she feels the narrowness of our income as much as I do, she manages to live within her allowance, and I don't believe she owes a franc in the world. But, Papa Bouchard, to come to business——"

De Meneval paused. He had a good deal of courage, but the stony silence with which his confidences were met would have disconcerted an ogre.

"Go on, Monsieur le Capitaine," said Monsieur Bouchard, icily.

"I'm going on. You see, it is just this way—that is——" de Meneval floundered—"as I was going to say—Léontine, you know, is perfect—it really is touching to see how she bears our enforced but unnecessary poverty. I wish I could do as well."

Here de Meneval came to a dead stop, and Monsieur Bouchard, by way of encouraging him, repeated, in the same tone:

"Go on, Monsieur le Capitaine."

"But I *can't* go on with you fixing that basilisk glare on me," cried de Meneval, rising and walking about excitedly. "I believe, if you say 'Go on, Monsieur le Capitaine,' to me again, I'll do something desperate—smash

the mirror with my stick, or turn on the fire alarm. I assure you, Monsieur Bouchard, I am still a respectable member of society. I don't beat my wife or cheat at cards, and I have never committed a felony in my life."

"Glad to hear it," was Papa Bouchard's fatherly reception of this speech.

De Meneval, after walking once or twice up and down the room, succeeded in mastering his indignation, and sat quietly down in the chair he had just vacated, facing Monsieur Bouchard; then, still floundering awkwardly, he managed to say:

"I—I—am very much in want, I am, at present; in short, I am in the most unpleasant predicament." And then he mumbled, "Money."

"So I knew the moment you entered this room," was Monsieur Bouchard's rejoinder.

"There, sir," said de Meneval, recovering his spirits now that the murder was out, "I wish you had said so in the beginning. It would have saved me a very bad quarter of an hour."

"Young man," severely replied Monsieur Bouchard, "I had not the slightest wish to save you a bad quarter of an hour."

"So it seems; but I will tell you just how it stands. You know I am stationed at Melun——"

"I have known that fact ever since I knew you."

"Very well, sir. There is a music hall at Melun—the Pigeon House—with a garden back of it, kept by one Michaux, a rascal if ever I saw one. Now, it's very dull at Melun the evenings I am on duty and can't get back to Léontine in Paris, and it's a small place, and quite naturally, when one hears the music going at the Pigeon House, and sees the lights flashing and the people eating and drinking under the trees on the terrace garden, it's quite natural, I say, to drop in there for the evening."

"Quite natural for you, sir. Go on, Monsieur le Capitaine."

De Meneval restrained his impulse

to brain Monsieur Bouchard, sitting so sternly and primly before him, and kept on:

"Then there is the garden—jolly place, with electric lights—where you can get a pretty fair meal. It is quite unique—nothing like it in Paris or anywhere else that I can think of, and I've seen a good many—" here de Meneval hastily checked himself. "It's quite the thing to give suppers to the young ladies of the ballet—and some of them are not so young, either—in the garden. The proprietor, of course, encourages it, and the girls are permitted to come out in their stage costumes to have an ice or a glass of wine. All the fellows in my regiment do it; it's considered quite the thing, and their mothers and sisters come out to the Pigeon House to see them do it. If it wasn't for the support given the place by the garrison it would have to close up, and then Melun would be duller than ever. The Pigeon House is unconventional, but perfectly respectable."

"Possibly," drily replied Monsieur Bouchard, "but not probably."

"Good heavens, sir! you are mistaken. Léontine has been teasing me for a month past to take her out there to supper some evening, and I've promised to do so this very next week. Do you think I'd take my wife to any place that wasn't respectable?"

De Meneval was getting warm over this, and Monsieur Bouchard was forced to admit that he supposed the Pigeon House *was* respectable.

"But that doesn't prevent these jolly little suppers to the young ladies of the ballet, and especially those given to them by the officers. I assure you it is mere harmless eating and drinking. The poor girls have to work hard, and when they get through of an evening I dare say very few of them have two francs to buy something to eat. So a number of us have got into the way of giving these poor souls supper after the performance. Even Major Fallière goes to these suppers, and you know his nickname in the regiment."

"No, I know of him only as a very

correct, middle-aged man. I wish you had the same sort of reputation as Major Fallière."

"Well, he is called by the juniors old P. M. P.—that is to say, the Pink of Military Propriety. And Fallière is my chum, and *he* goes to these little suppers."

De Meneval brought this out with an air of triumph, but Monsieur Bouchard remained coldly unresponsive, and then de Meneval let the cat out of the bag.

"And I say, Monsieur Bouchard, the proprietor of the Pigeon House sent me in my account the other day—nineteen hundred francs, nineteen centimes—and I haven't got the money to pay it."

De Meneval lay back and waited for the explosion. Monsieur Bouchard started from his chair, bawling:

"Nineteen hundred francs! And you no doubt expect me to pay it out of your wife's income! I wonder what Léontine would say to this!"

"That's just what I've been wondering, too," replied de Meneval, somewhat dolefully. "Léontine is the dearest girl in the world, but she is a woman, after all. I can prove to her that I have never given a franc's worth to any other woman, except something to eat and drink, but all the same I'd just as soon she would think I spent my Melun evenings sitting in my quarters, with her picture before me and reading up on ballistics, as an artillery officer should."

"And would you deliberately impose on her innocence in this respect?" asked Monsieur Bouchard, indignantly.

"My dear sir," calmly replied de Meneval, "you have never been married. If you had, you would deal more intelligently with the situation."

"I think our standard of intelligence is not the same," grimly responded Monsieur Bouchard. "But when I tell Léontine about this nineteen hundred francs due at the Pigeon House, I trust she will be able to deal with you intelligently."

"I am afraid she will," replied de Meneval, with some anxiety; "but

after it's paid I know I can persuade her that it was not the least actual harm—just a little lark in the way of killing time.”

“And may I ask, since you speak so confidently of its being paid, whom do you expect to pay it?”

“You, sir, of course,” replied de Meneval, taking a cigar out of Monsieur Bouchard's case.

Papa Bouchard jumped as if a hornet had stung him. “I, sir? Since you have assumed this modest expectation, perhaps you anticipate that I will pay it out of my private income?”

“Oh, no, I mean out of my wife's income,” replied de Meneval, puffing away at his cigar.

“You are too modest, Monsieur le Capitaine. Now let me tell you this—you misunderstood your customer in bringing this outrageous bill to me, and it won't be paid. I have a sincere affection for Léontine, and I don't intend to let any captain of artillery in the French army, husband or no husband, make ducks and drakes of her money.”

Papa Bouchard leaned back, folded his arms and looked the embodiment of statuesque determination. Captain de Meneval puffed a while longer at his cigar, and then rose. There was resolution, as if he still held a trump card to play, written on his countenance.

“Very well, Monsieur Bouchard,” he said, readjusting the blossom in his buttonhole. “I am sorry you are so unyielding. You didn't ask me if I was prepared to offer any security that the loan would be repaid. If you had I should have given you this.”

De Meneval pulled from his pocket a string of diamonds, every stone glittering like a star.

“This is the diamond necklace I gave Léontine on our marriage. Of course, I could not afford it, but I was in love with her—I'm more in love with her now—and I gave her what would please her, without counting the cost.”

Papa Bouchard gasped. “And Léontine—does she know of this?”

De Meneval shook his head. “You

see, when I bought this necklace for twenty thousand francs the jeweler showed me at the same time an exact copy of it in paste—seventy-five francs. He told me when he sold a necklace like this he usually sold a counterfeit. I bought the seventy-five-franc necklace, too—and I didn't mention it to Léontine. I think all the philosophers, beginning with the Egyptian school of something or other B.C., down through the Greeks and the Romans to Kant and Schopenhauer, agree that it is not philosophic for a married man to tell everything to his wife. So I never told Léontine about this imitation necklace, but kept it for an emergency, as the jeweler—a married man—advised me. To-night, when I saw I was in a tight place and had to come to you, I quietly slipped the paste necklace into the case, which we keep in our strong-box, and put the real one into my pocket. I came within an ace of being caught by Léontine, though. The dear girl entered the room a minute afterward and asked me to get out her diamond necklace—she was going to the opera with some friends of hers—and off she's gone, glittering with paste, while here is the real thing.”

Papa Bouchard was staggered for a minute or two. Then he said: “So you expected me to turn amateur pawnbroker for your benefit?”

“Well,” replied de Meneval, stroking his mustache, “I should not have put it in that brutally frank fashion myself, but if you don't care to act the amateur pawnbroker, I shall be obliged to take it to the professionals.”

“No, no, no!” cried Papa Bouchard. He really was fond of Léontine, and didn't mean to risk her diamonds. Nevertheless, there was a stand-and-deliver air about the whole transaction which vexed him inexpressibly. He sat silent for a while and so did de Meneval.

Papa Bouchard, for all that he had been hectorated by a woman all his life, was yet no fool. He saw that de Meneval had him in a trap, and rea-

soned out the whole thing inside of two minutes.

"Now, Monsieur le Capitaine," he said, presently, "I see where we stand. I will not lend you the money out of Léontine's income—but I will lend it to you myself. I shall keep this necklace until the money is paid. Meanwhile, I shall go out to see this place—the Pigeon House—and judge for myself all these facts that you allege."

"Do!" cried the cheerful reprobate, with a grin. "Perhaps you'll like it and get into the habit of going there."

"And perhaps," replied Papa Bouchard, "I may not like it, and you may have your income reduced if you persist in going there. And then, when the whole transaction is concluded and the money repaid, I shall disclose every particular of it to Léontine."

"By all means!" De Meneval was actually laughing in Papa Bouchard's face. "I'll deny every word of it, of course, and call for proof. I'll tell Léontine you tried to persuade me to go out there with you and I refused. I'll bring twenty of the best fellows in the regiment to swear *you* gave the suppers—and you'll see who comes out ahead in *that* game."

Papa Bouchard was so horrified at the cold-blooded villainy of this that he could hardly speak for a minute. But he refused to take the threat seriously, and demanding the bill, which de Meneval promptly produced, said, stiffly:

"You will hear from me in a day or two."

"Ta, ta!" called out the graceless dog of a captain, picking up his hat. "Remember, you are on your good behavior. One single indiscretion at the Pigeon House and I'll telegraph the whole story to Mademoiselle Bouchard, and then——"

Papa Bouchard simply sat and swelled with rage at the unabashed front of this captain of artillery—but he was galvanized into motion by a light tap on the door and a musical voice calling:

"Are you in, Papa Bouchard?"

Although all the fulminations of

Monsieur Bouchard had failed to affect Captain de Meneval, the sound of that voice flurried him considerably. For it was Léontine's, and de Meneval had no particular desire for an interview with her under Papa Bouchard's basilisk eye. He turned quite pale, did this robust captain, and muttered:

"I don't want to be caught here."

Papa Bouchard smiled in a superior manner—he rather liked the notion of de Meneval being caught there—and called out to Léontine:

"Come in."

Papa Bouchard's hat, cape, greatcoat and umbrella lay on a chair where he had placed them on coming in. Without so much as saying, "By your leave," de Meneval slung the greatcoat round him, clapped Papa Bouchard's hat on his head, seized the umbrella in such a way as to hide his face, and with his own hat under his arm opened the door to the lobby and darted past Léontine, nearly knocking her down.

Léontine, wearing an evening gown, a long and beautiful white mantle, and a chiffon scarf over her head, entered, somewhat discomposed by her encounter.

"What a very rude man that was who pushed by me so suddenly!" she said, advancing. "Some of your tiresome clients, Papa Bouchard, and I order you not to have that creature here again." And she ran forward and kissed Monsieur Bouchard on his bald head.

Now it was plain that this pretty Léontine took liberties with her guardian, godfather and trustee, and also that Papa Bouchard liked these liberties. It was in vain that he tried to assume a stern air with Léontine. She pinched his ear when he scolded, drew caricatures of him when he frowned, and when at last he was forced to smile, as he always was, pushed herself on the arm of his chair and declined to be evicted. And she was so very pretty! The French have a saying that the devil himself was handsome when he was young. Léontine de Meneval had more than the mere beauty of youth, of form, of

color. She was the embodiment of graceful gaiety. She looked like one of those brilliant white butterflies whose lives are spent dancing in the sun. The great and glorious dowry of love, of youth, of beauty, of health, of happiness was hers. Her entering the room was like a breath of daffodils in Spring. She was a most beguiling creature. It was a source of wonder and congratulation to Papa Bouchard that this charming girl did not succeed in bamboozling all of her own income out of him and all of his as well.

Having kissed him, pinched his ear and otherwise agreeably maltreated her trustee, Léontine looked round the new apartment with dancing eyes.

"Well," she cried, laughing, "I see how it is. You couldn't stand the Rue Clarisse another day or hour. Did anybody ever tell you, Papa Bouchard, that you had a vein of—a vein of—what shall I call it?—a taste for the wine of life in you?"

"Nobody ever did," replied Papa Bouchard, trying to be stern.

"Then I tell you so. And look at these pictures—oh, oh!"

Léontine covered her face with her chiffon scarf, to avoid the sight of the young ladies pointing skyward with their toes.

"And I wonder what Aunt Céleste will say when she sees them," continued this impish Léontine.

"She won't see them. They will be removed to-morrow," hastily put in Papa Bouchard.

"You'd better, you dear old thing, if you value your life. I shall have to tell Victor about this. How he will laugh! I do all I can to make him laugh and to amuse him when he is with me, for it is so dull for him when he is obliged to stay at Melun. When his regimental duties are over he has nothing to do in the evening but to sit in his quarters and study up ballistics, as he calls it, and look at my picture by way of refreshment."

Papa Bouchard sniffed. He commonly sniffed at the mention of Captain de Meneval's name.

"But," continued Léontine, trying

to curl Papa Bouchard's scanty hair, using her pretty fingers for curling tongs, "he won't be so lonely now at Melun, for his old chum, Major Fallière, is stationed there, too, and he and Victor are like brothers. You know, dear Papa Bouchard, that you yourself admitted Major Fallière's friendship to be a letter of recommendation to any man. He is called the Pink of Military Propriety, and if Victor led the larky life you so unjustly suspect him of, he couldn't be friends with Major Fallière, who is positively straitlaced."

"I can't say I ever saw a really straitlaced major," replied Papa Bouchard.

"And I have not yet seen this dear old P. M. P. He was in Algiers when Victor and I were married, and he has been so little in Paris since his return that he has not yet had a chance to call. But he has sent me word by Victor that he already loves me, and I hope to see him in a few days, for Victor has promised to let me come out to Melun and dine at the Pigeon House."

"The Pigeon House!"

"Yes. Why not? You'll be going there yourself, I dare say, now that you have eloped from Aunt Céleste. Oh, you'll be a desperate character in time, I have no doubt. I see it in your eye. Victor and I, though, shall keep watch on you, if you go too far and too fast!"

This was a nice way for a ward to talk to her trustee—and such a trustee as Monsieur Bouchard! Therefore Papa Bouchard called up his most resolute air of disapproval, and said:

"I am afraid the Pigeon House is hardly a proper place for you to go to, Léontine."

"If I thought that I should have been out there long ago," responded this sprightly imp. "But, unluckily, it's perfectly proper."

"I wish," replied Papa Bouchard, "you could get one single serious idea into that head of yours."

"I have a great many serious ideas," said Léontine, suddenly as-

suming an unwonted air of gravity, and leaving her perch on the arm of Papa Bouchard's chair for a seat directly facing him. "What would you say if I told you that I am taking a deep and real interest in practical sociological questions, such as giving employment to the deserving workers?"

"I should say you were at last reaching the development I have always wished for you. But I hope you are confining your experiments to giving work only. The mere giving of money tends to pauperize. The giving of work is the intelligent mode of benefiting a man or a woman."

"That's it precisely," cried Léontine, instantly losing her air of gravity, and jumping up to kiss the bald spot on the top of Papa Bouchard's head. Then she resumed her chair and her serious manner simultaneously. "That's what I knew you'd say, dear Papa Bouchard. I had your approval in mind all the time. It came about in this way," continued Léontine, solemnly. "There is a very worthy man—a Pole, Putzki by name—who is one of the best tailors in Paris. I became very much interested in this man; likewise in his jackets, coats and riding habits. I have been to his shop several times and talked with him. The man is an exile from his native country. How sad that is! And he cannot go back. He is very deserving and has a family to support. He doesn't ask for charity, but I gave him——"

"All the money you had," hastily and angrily interjected Papa Bouchard.

"Not at all," replied Léontine, with dignity. "I had learned better than that. I have not given him a franc. But I ordered, out of pure charity and good will to a fellow creature, five walking gowns, three jackets, two long coats, a yachting costume and a couple of riding habits."

Papa Bouchard's mouth opened wide, but no sound came forth. Léontine, taking advantage of his amazed silence, kept on, rapidly:

"Then there is another deserving

case—Louise, a milliner and modiste. She has a husband who squanders her money on his pleasures. If Victor did that I think it would kill me. Like Putzki, she does not ask money, but work. Out of sympathy for her I have had her make me four ball gowns, nine visiting and house costumes, some little *négligées* and things and about eighteen hats. And here are the bills."

With this Léontine drew out two huge bills and thrust them into Papa Bouchard's scowling face. Not only was he annoyed with Léontine for her extravagance, but he was conscious that she had fooled him. He sat perfectly still and silent, glaring into Léontine's serious, pretty countenance—not so serious, though, but that Papa Bouchard saw the shadow of a smile on her rose-lipped mouth.

"And you expect to pay those bills out of your allowance, I presume?" said Papa Bouchard, sarcastically, after a moment.

"You flatter me," replied Léontine. "I always knew I was a good financier, but to expect me to pay such bills as these out of my meagre allowance is to credit me with the financial genius of a Rothschild."

"Then they will go unpaid!" cried Papa Bouchard, determinedly. This assault on him, following hard on Captain de Meneval's, was rather more than he could stand. Léontine did not know it, but the defeat Papa Bouchard had just suffered at the hands of that good-looking scapegrace, her husband, had hardened his heart against her and her milliner's and tailor's bills. However, she was not easily frightened. She only tapped her little foot, smiled loftily and said:

"But they *must* be paid!"

Papa Bouchard, who had no more voice than a crow, began to hum a tune and to turn over the leaves of a scientific journal that lay on the table before him. A pause followed. Then Léontine said again, very softly and very determinedly:

"And they *will* be paid."

"How, may I ask?" inquired Papa Bouchard, whirling round on her.

Léontine, throwing aside her chiffon scarf, which she had held round her bare, white neck, showed a string of diamonds, as she thought them to be—paste, Papa Bouchard knew them to be—and said:

"My wedding gift from Victor. They are worth twenty thousand francs. I can easily raise ten thousand on them."

Papa Bouchard lay back in his chair, absolutely stunned. So, both of them were for turning the necklace into cash! And what scandal would be precipitated if Léontine carried out her intention! The necklace would be discovered to be paste, and Léontine would naturally be deeply incensed against her husband; Papa Bouchard was that already, but he really loved his little Léontine, and the thought of trouble between her and her husband disturbed him.

"Does Captain de Meneval know of these bills?" he asked, significantly.

Léontine hung her head. "No," she faltered, "and that is the part that distresses me. Victor has been so *very* prudent—has no bills, poor fellow—he has no amusements away from me—and I—I have been so selfish—" Léontine's eyes were bright with tears.

"Don't make yourself unhappy about Victor being too prudent. He need never give you any anxiety on that point," was Papa Bouchard's unfeeling reply.

There was a moment's silence. Papa Bouchard, who had a shrewd head for business, was rapidly cogitating the best thing to do under the circumstances. Léontine, who had no head for business at all, was wondering how she could keep Victor from noticing the absence of the necklace. She had just concluded to fall into a state of great weakness and prostration, thus preventing her from going into society, when she received something like a galvanic shock, for there, before her eyes, Papa Bouchard was holding up the exact counterpart of her necklace. The two masses of jewels made a blaze of light.

"Where did you get it?" she gasped,

pointing to the glittering thing in Papa Bouchard's hand.

Now Papa Bouchard was a clever man, as men are clever, but he was not so clever as a woman. A brilliant scheme had flashed into his mind—he would produce the real necklace, tell Léontine it was paste, and so make sure that she would not take it to the pawnbroker, and he could manage both de Meneval and Léontine equally well with the paste necklace. He did not much fancy having the responsibility of so many diamonds as the real one contained. But he had not foreseen this direct and embarrassing question of Léontine's. He looked blank for a moment or two, and then, having no better answer ready, replied:

"I wish you wouldn't ask such questions, Léontine. Of course I came by it honestly."

"Of course—of course," cried Léontine, jumping up. "Does Aunt Céleste know of this?"

"N—n—no," faltered Papa Bouchard. This was another facer for him.

Léontine had not the slightest doubt that Papa Bouchard could give a perfectly rational and correct account of how he came by the necklace—it was probably the property of some client—but seeing a fine chance to hold Papa Bouchard up to obloquy and to lecture him, she promptly determined to give him the benefit of her pretended suspicions. She therefore rose with great dignity, gathered her drapery about her, and looking significantly at Papa Bouchard, said:

"You will pardon me for saying that this has a most singular appearance, and I shall lose no time in informing Aunt Céleste."

Papa Bouchard turned pale. Was ever such a diabolical trap laid for an innocent man? He was not at all sure, if he gave the true account of how he came by the stones, that Captain de Meneval would not carry out his threat and deny the whole business. The fellow had actually laughed while he was making the threat, and seemed to regard it as an

excellent joke to impair the peace and honor of a respectable elderly gentleman. Papa Bouchard got up, sat down again, and groaned.

"Léontine," he said, to that professedly indignant young woman, "you don't understand."

"No, I *don't* understand," replied Léontine, with unkind emphasis.

"It was this way—I was out at St. Germain the other day—" Papa Bouchard was floundering hopelessly, but a bright thought struck him—"the day of the meeting of the Society of French Antiquarians. Very interesting time we had—several specimens of the paleozoic age were found——"

"And this match to my necklace was among them? Fie, Papa Bouchard!"

"Not at all. Will you let me speak? I say I was out at St. Germain for the meeting of the Society of French Antiquarians. The curator of the museum is a great friend of mine—he has an old mother—finest old lady you ever saw—eighty years old, bedridden and stone blind, but as young as a daisy, full of life and talk—it's a treat to see her. My friend wanted a birthday present for her, and I had seen this necklace in a shop window in the Avenue de l'Opéra—and I proposed to—to—to—" Papa Bouchard faltered.

"For an old lady, eighty years old and bedridden? Oh, Papa Bouchard, try again!"

"Léontine," said Papa Bouchard, sternly, "I don't like these flippant interruptions. I did not say—I never meant to say that I proposed to buy a diamond necklace for an old lady, bedridden and eighty years of age. It happened there were spectacles of all kinds made and kept at the same shop—and I went and got a pair of Scotch pebble glasses, at fifty francs——"

"But you said she was stone blind!"

"What if I did? I didn't say I got the glasses for her. But as I see you won't let me tell you the story of the necklace, I shall simply keep it to myself. As a matter of fact, they are not diamonds; they are paste."

Léontine, taking the real stones in her hand, examined them carefully. Then, laying them against the necklace round her neck, remarked: "I see they are. Paste, pure and simple."

Papa Bouchard could hardly suppress a smile at this, but he did.

"Very well. They are paste, and they cost seventy-five francs. Now, I will make you a proposition. I propose that I shall look into these bills and see what arrangement can be made with Putzki and Louise, and reach some basis of settlement whereby I may be able, by making a series of small payments out of your income, to get rid of them. Meanwhile, I am afraid to trust you with your own necklace—you will always be trying to raise money on it. So I shall hand you over this paste one, which no one but a jeweler can tell from the real one. You will give me the real one—and I will hold it until your bills are paid. Then I will return it to you. I suppose you don't wish your husband to know of this, and I will agree to keep it from him as long as you keep out of debt. But if you ever transgress in this way again I shall tell him the whole story."

Léontine listened to this with the utmost gravity, and then replied: "You are a very clever man, Papa Bouchard, but you will find your little Léontine a very clever woman—too clever to put her head into the noose you have so kindly held open for her. I sha'n't dream of giving up my necklace for anything less than a cheque out of my own money for the payment in full of these bills. I should be willing to take the paste necklace temporarily until the bills are paid. After you have returned it to me I sha'n't be in the least afraid of your telling Victor, for if you do I shall tell Aunt Céleste all your tales about the bedridden old lady and the trip to St. Germain and the widow——"

"What widow?" asked Papa Bouchard, forgetful for a moment of the lady he had met in the railway carriage two days in succession.

"The prim little widow you went to Verneuil with. My maid happened

to be on the same train and saw you helping her out, and heard you say to her you were going to St. Germain to-day—and by the way, I happen to know you *did* go to St. Germain to-day."

What a story was this to hatch about the most correct old gentleman in Paris! Papa Bouchard simply glared at Léontine, but that merry young woman was smiling and dimpling, as if debts and duns and trips to Verneuil and diamond necklaces were quite the ordinary ingredients of life. The hen that hatched a cockatrice was no more puzzled and dismayed than was Papa Bouchard at the vagaries of his ward.

"Well," cried he, after a pause, determined to put a bold front on the matter, "what if I did find a lady in the same railway carriage with me, going to Verneuil? I hadn't hired the whole train, or even a whole carriage. And what if she was a widow, and good-looking! And suppose to-day, in the pursuit of science, I go to St. Germain, and quite by accident I find the same lady in the compartment with me? What does that mean except a series of accidents?"

"Yes, a series of accidents," replied Léontine, with an arch glance. The minx seemed to have no more conscience about teasing poor Papa Bouchard than had her rattlebrain of a husband. "It is remarkable that accidents like these always happen in cycles. I should be willing to wager that a third accident is now brewing, and you will see that prim little widow again before the week is out. I shouldn't be surprised if this change of quarters had something to do with it!"

"Léontine!" said Papa Bouchard, indignantly, but that heedless young person only laughed and said:

"I'll tell Victor that. How the dear boy will laugh! The fact is, I don't know whether I can let Victor associate with you or not—you might lead him off into your own primrose path of dalliance with widows!"

Was ever anything so exasperating! Papa Bouchard ground his teeth

—he had a great mind to throw over the whole business of Léontine's money and her affairs, only he knew it would please her too well. His grim meditations were interrupted by Léontine tapping him on the shoulder and saying, "Now, will you hand me over the cheque for the whole amount of those bills—six thousand francs—or must I take this—" touching the paste necklace round her throat—"to the pawn-broker?"

"You certainly can't expect me to give you a cheque until I have looked into these swindling bills."

"That's true. However, your promise will be enough. I will make this compromise with you: I'll take the paste—" taking up the real necklace as it lay sparkling on the table—"and you may take the stones. When the bills are paid you won't be afraid then to trust me with my own necklace—"

"Yes, I shall," replied Papa Bouchard. "But at all events, I reserve the right to tell your husband if I choose to. I am not intimidated by your threat to tell my sister some cock-and-bull story about *me*."

Léontine reflected a moment, her pretty head on her hand.

"Do you know, dear Papa Bouchard," she said, after a while, "that you and I are engaged in what the Americans call a game of bluff?"

"Don't know anything about the Americans. Don't know what bluff is."

"Oh, yes, you do—you know the thing, although you may not recognize the name. But you are a good soul, Papa Bouchard, and Victor and I *do* bother you a good deal; but only help me out this once—with Putzki and Louise—and don't tell Victor, and I'll not tell Aunt Céleste, and everything will come perfectly right."

As Léontine spoke she unclasped her necklace, kissed it, and with a gesture of scorn put on the real necklace, saying to herself: "I never thought I should come to this."

And then came a loud rat-tat at the door, and in walked Captain de Me-

neval again. He carried Monsieur Bouchard's impedimenta, with which he had so unceremoniously made off. Both he and Léontine looked thoroughly disconcerted at meeting each other. De Meneval thought she had gone away. Léontine blushed guiltily, and had barely enough presence of mind to cover up the necklace lying on the table with Papa Bouchard's scientific journal.

"Ah, good-evening, Papa Bouchard!" cried this arch-hypocrite of an artillery captain, as if he had not seen Monsieur Bouchard half an hour before. "I came to return your umbrella and coat. Thanks very much for lending them to me in an emergency. Why, little girl, I thought you were on your way to the opera?"

"I am just going," answered Léontine, moving toward the door.

"One moment!" cried Papa Bouchard, waving his arm authoritatively. These two scapegraces had used him for their own purposes that night, had made game of him and had threatened to discover a mare's nest to Mademoiselle Bouchard. Now, however, he would take his revenge. "Wait," he said to Léontine, who returned reluctantly to her former place.

Monsieur Bouchard, assuming the attitude and tone with which he might have addressed a couple of criminals in the pursuit of his professional duties, then continued:

"This is a very auspicious opportunity for me to speak to you both, in each other's presence, with a view to your mutual reform. Observe the word; I use it advisedly." He paused. Léontine trembled with apprehension, while de Meneval surreptitiously mopped his brow. "You have both of you been very extravagant—wasteful, I may say. Nothing that I have yet said has availed to stop the outgo of money far beyond your reasonable wants—so *I* think. Now, I have come to the conclusion that in order for you to economize you must give up your apartment. You must leave Paris."

Leave Paris!

De Meneval was not so stunned but that he could get up rather a ghastly laugh.

"Leave Paris! Ha, ha! That's little enough to me, Papa Bouchard—Léontine and ballistics are all I want to make me happy anywhere—but Léontine, oh, I know she won't go!"

"Won't she, eh? Not to an inexpensive little cottage outside of Paris—within striking distance of Melun, so you may go back and forth—a *very* inexpensive cottage?"

"Well, if that's your game," cried de Meneval, savagely, "there are plenty of cottages to be had at Melun. Our veterinarian has just given up his cottage—three rooms and a dog kennel. That's cheap enough. Shall I take it to-morrow for Captain and Madame de Meneval?"

"You are trifling, Monsieur le Capitaine," coolly answered Papa Bouchard. "You understand perfectly well what I mean."

"But, Papa Bouchard," put in Léontine, faintly, "while *I* don't object to the cottage, it would be cruel to Victor to force him away from Paris. It is so dull, anyway, at Melun. The only recreation he has is when he comes to Paris. Poor, poor Victor!"

Léontine was almost weeping—de Meneval was swearing between his teeth. Papa Bouchard was waving his arm about, serene in the consciousness of power.

"I do not say you are to leave Paris to-night, or even to-morrow; perhaps a week—possibly a month—may be given you. But you are both too fond of gaities, of clothes, of suppers and other dissipated things, and there are too many jewelers' shops in Paris." This thrust caused both of the culprits to quake. "So you must go to some retired place and economize."

"I see," replied de Meneval, who was thoroughly exasperated. "Having yourself practically run away from a quiet and respectable locality to these gay quarters, with young ladies of the ballet on every hand—" de Meneval

pointed angrily to the red-and-gold young ladies on the walls—"now you wish to send my poor little wife off to some hole of a village, where one may exist but not live. I don't speak of myself—I don't care. It's for her."

"Very well," answered Papa Bouchard, maliciously. "You may make that hole of a village a paradise steeped in dreamlike splendor to Léontine by your devoted and lover-like attentions to her. You can live over your honeymoon. Won't you like that, Léontine?"

"Y—yes," replied Léontine, dolefully.

"Some pretty rural place—all birds and flowers, eh? And a little dog. Doesn't the prospect charm you?"

"Yes—only—for Victor——"

"Haven't you just heard Victor say that all he needs to be perfectly happy are you and ballistics? So I suppose, Monsieur de Meneval, you will be reveling in rapture."

"I suppose so," replied de Meneval, gloomily. "Come, Léontine, shall I put you in the carriage? You won't have many chances of going to the opera, poor child, after this."

Léontine rose and said, coldly, "Good-night, Papa Bouchard." There was no tweaking of his ear, no patting of his bald head this time. They went out like two sulky and disappointed children.

Papa Bouchard remained chuckling to himself. He had those two naughty young creatures in the hollow of his hand—it would be a good while before they would dare to be saucy to him—and that little cottage in the suburbs was a fine idea. Strange it had not occurred to him before.

He seated himself in his easychair and began to review the events of his first day of liberty. His mind went back to the point where he had been interrupted by de Meneval's entrance—the point where the dear little bashful widow had appeared in his mind's eye. If he had been in the Rue Clarisse he would never even have dared to think of Madame Vernet, for his sister could actually read his thoughts. But here, in this jolly bachelor place,

he could think about widows all he liked. And shutting his eyes the better to recall that slim, shrinking, gray-gowned figure, he opened them to see Madame Vernet quietly walking into the room, without knocking and quite as if she belonged there. She advanced to the table on one side of the room, laid her lace parasol on it and proceeded to remove her long gloves, but stopped in the midst of the process to rearrange a chair and to set straight a picture—one of Monsieur Bouchard's.

"This is very comfortable," she said, musingly, "but I can improve it—when I am settled here."

Papa Bouchard listened as if in a dream. He had not progressed so far as that. And then Madame Vernet, turning and seeing him, uttered a faint shriek, as if she had seen a snake instead of a human being, and ran—but not toward the door.

"My dear Madame Vernet, pray do not be alarmed. It is only I—Monsieur Bouchard," cried Papa Bouchard, advancing to reassure her.

"Oh! is it you? Forgive me for being so agitated, but I am *so* easily frightened!" panted Madame Vernet. "Men always frighten me—I am the most timid woman in the world!"

"So I see," tenderly replied Papa Bouchard. He was standing quite close to Madame Vernet now, and she had clasped his arm, looking nervously about her as if she expected another man to spring out of the fireplace or down from the ceiling.

"But when I saw it was only you, all my fears vanished," she continued. "And will you tell me to what I am indebted for the honor and pleasure of this visit?"

"A question I was just asking myself. This is my new apartment."

"I beg pardon," replied Madame Vernet, "but it is *my* new apartment. I moved into it only to-day."

"And, Madame, *I* moved into it only to-day."

"It is number nine, fourth floor."

"No, Madame, it is number five, third floor."

"Ah," cried Madame Vernet. "I

see. My apartment is directly over this, and corresponds with it exactly. I did not go up high enough, and I am not quite familiar with the surroundings. How absurd!" and she laughed, showing the prettiest teeth imaginable.

"How delightful!" replied Monsieur Bouchard, gallantly.

"And how singular! This is the third time in three days we have met by accident."

An uncomfortable recollection of Léontine's speech about accidents of this sort occurring in cycles flashed through Monsieur Bouchard's brain, but he dismissed the thought with energy. He rather relished accidents that brought about meetings with a woman as winning, as charming, as elegant as Madame Vernet; and then there was that deliciously intoxicating feeling of independence—no need to cut the interview short, no labored explanation to give Mademoiselle Céleste. Monsieur Bouchard was his own man now—for the first time, at fifty-four years of age. So he smiled benevolently, and said:

"I wish I might ask you to sit down, but at least you will grant me permission to call on you."

"With pleasure," replied Madame Vernet. "And since you won't let me sit down—which, of course, wouldn't be proper, and I wouldn't commit the smallest impropriety for a million francs—at least let me walk about and look at your charming furnishings."

Papa Bouchard made a heartfelt apology for the red-and-gold young ladies on the walls, who evidently shocked Madame Vernet extremely. He said he meant to take them down the next day. Madame Vernet replied with gentle severity that he ought to take them down that night. However, she went into raptures over "Kittens at Play" and "Socrates and His Pupils," which gave Papa Bouchard a high idea of her intellectuality.

But in the midst of a learned dissertation on "The Coliseum by Moonlight" Madame Vernet's eyes fell on the glittering paste necklace, which Monsieur Bouchard had left lying on

the table. She picked it up gently—she did everything gently—and playfully clasping it round her neck, cried:

"How charming! I won't ask you for whom this is intended; for a sister—a niece, perhaps. Lucky girl!"

"Indeed, it is not intended for anyone," replied Monsieur Bouchard. "It is of trifling value—paste, at seventy-five francs to buy, and would sell for nothing."

"Nevertheless, it is very pretty," said Madame Vernet, looking at herself coquettishly in the mirror. And then, apparently forgetting all about the necklace, she confided to Monsieur Bouchard that she was so nervous at living alone—the only thing that reconciled her was that she had an uncle and an aunt living in the neighborhood who would watch over her. Monsieur Bouchard tried to reassure her, but Madame Vernet declined to be reassured. Her timidity was constitutional—she should never be courageous as other women, and so protesting, she gathered up her parasol and gloves, and with blushing apologies for her intrusion and a bashful invitation to Monsieur Bouchard to return her unique visit, made for the door.

Monsieur Bouchard was charmed, flattered, tickled and flustered beyond expression, but he was likewise terrified at the thought that Madame Vernet had evidently forgotten that she had the necklace clasped round her throat and was going off with it. Paste though it was, Monsieur Bouchard had no mind to let it go out of his own hands. He followed her to the door, saying, "Madame, you have probably forgotten—"

"Oh, no, I haven't," smilingly replied Madame Vernet; "I know my own apartment now—it is number nine."

"But—but—you have inadvertently—er—a—" Poor Monsieur Bouchard mopped his forehead in his agony.

"Yes, quite inadvertently entered your apartment. Oh, how alarmed I was when I first saw you! But you were so kind. Forgive me, and don't

forget your promise to call. Good-bye."

And just as Monsieur Bouchard had made up his mind to ask for the necklace she fitted out of the door.

Monsieur Bouchard sank, or rather fell, into a chair. His head was in a whirl. He felt as if the events of that day were beginning to be a little too much for him. Just at that moment Pierre appeared from no one could exactly say where.

"Come, now," said that functionary, in a tone of what Monsieur Bouchard would have thought brazen familiarity the day before, "I know all about it, I saw the whole transaction; remember, Monsieur, we are pals now. She can't get money on it any more than Madame de Meneval can, and she'll be sure to turn up again. Oh, you'll come out all right, Monsieur. Cheer up. We'll live a merry life, and after all, it is something to be away from that dreary old hole in the Rue Clarisse. I feel like doing this." And Pierre, the staid, sober and decorous valet of thirty years' service, cut the pigeon wing, twirled round on one leg, with the other stuck stiffly out like a ballet dancer's, and kissing his hand in the direction of Madame Vernet's apartment, cried, "Oh, we're a gay pair of boys! We mean to see life! And no peaching on each other!" And with ineffable impudence, he winked at Monsieur Bouchard.

II

MONSIEUR BOUCHARD waked next morning with a delicious sense of youth and irresponsibility. There was no one to demand an account of him for anything. As for Pierre, Monsieur Bouchard determined to treat his vagaries in a jocular manner—it was simply the honest fellow's way of showing joy at his emancipation. And when Pierre appeared, to shave his master, both of them wore a cheerful air. It was their 14th of July.

Pierre, at the same time he brought the hot water, brought Monsieur Bou-

chard's letters. What a comfort to read them without having to give an explanation of every one to Mademoiselle Céleste! Monsieur Bouchard actually enjoyed receiving his tailor's bill for the half-year under these circumstances. As for Pierre, he went about whistling jovially, and Monsieur Bouchard had not the heart or the inclination to stop him. The only fly in Monsieur Bouchard's ointment was the unpleasant reflection that Madame Vernet still had the paste necklace, but he felt sure that she had discovered her inadvertence of the night before, and would return the thing during the day.

"I suppose," said Pierre, who seemed to have quite taken the direction of Monsieur Bouchard's affairs, "that Monsieur will be looking after the bills of Captain and Madame de Meneval to-day."

"I certainly shall," replied Monsieur Bouchard.

"And, Monsieur, you will find it necessary to go out to the Pigeon House at Melun to settle up Monsieur le Capitaine's account without Madame finding it out?"

"I suppose so," answered Monsieur Bouchard. "It is a nuisance; I never was at Melun in my life."

"But that's no reason why Monsieur never should go to Melun; and I've been told that the Pigeon House is a very gay place, with excellent wine. Suppose Monsieur makes an evening of it out there?"

"Pierre," said Monsieur Bouchard, wheeling round on him, "are you trying to get me into all sorts of indiscretions in order to report me to the Rue Clarisse?"

"Lord, no, sir!" replied Pierre, with much readiness. "I am going to the Moulin Rouge myself to-night, and I'm sure if my wife knew it she would take not only my hair, but my scalp with it, off my head. The Moulin Rouge is a harmless enough place, but that's what's been the matter with our bringing up, Monsieur—we weren't allowed to go to harmless places even. For my part, I mean to have my fling, even if my wife *does*

find it out, and disciplines me. But there's no reason for either one of us being found out if we'll only agree to stand by each other."

This was very satisfactory; in fact, everything seemed to be coming Monsieur Bouchard's way, except—the paste necklace. The thought of that, like the ghost at *Lady Macbeth's* tea party, would not down. Monsieur Bouchard waited and lingered and dallied over his breakfast, and yet no parcel came from Madame Vernet. He did not care to remain at home all day waiting for it; no doubt it would come. It occurred to him that the best plan was to take Pierre completely into his confidence. It was true the rascal knew something of what had happened the night before, but Monsieur Bouchard felt it necessary, in Pierre's new rôle of trusty henchman and prime minister, to confide all the particulars to him. However, this must be done in a manner consistent with the relations of master and man. So, when Pierre was handing him his coat, hat and gloves, preparatory to going out, Monsieur Bouchard remarked, quite casually, as if Pierre knew nothing of the happenings of the night before:

"By the way, I am expecting a little parcel to be sent me by Madame Vernet, the lady on the next floor, a very pretty little woman—a widow—"

"Trust Monsieur for finding out all the pretty little widows between here and the Rue Clarisse," replied Pierre, with the impudent grin that had scarce left his face since he established himself in the Rue Bassano.

Now, this remark was not only grossly familiar but grotesquely untrue, so Monsieur Bouchard frowned and said, sternly:

"You forget yourself."

"And all the pretty little widows will have an eye on Monsieur," replied this unabashed reprobate of a Pierre.

At this Monsieur Bouchard wished to frown, but could not. Instead, his mouth came open in a pleased smile.

"Well, well, that may or may not be true. At all events, last night Madame Vernet, by the merest accident, came into this apartment, mistaking it for her own." Monsieur Bouchard paused. It was rather a difficult story to tell.

"By accident, did you say, Monsieur?"

"Altogether by accident. A paste necklace belonging to Madame de Meneval was lying on my table, and Madame Vernet inadvertently carried it off. She will no doubt return it this morning. Take care of it when it comes."

"I will, sir, if it comes. But Monsieur will pardon me if I say I don't expect it to come—that is, if I know anything about women."

"But you *don't* know anything about women," curtly replied Monsieur Bouchard. Pierre was getting quite beside himself.

"True, Monsieur, I have been married thirty years. That is enough to convince the toughest skeptic who ever lived that he doesn't know anything about women. But, all the same, Madame Vernet isn't going to send that necklace back."

Monsieur Bouchard turned pale and took an agitated turn about the room.

"Did Monsieur buy the paste necklace for — for — Mademoiselle Bouchard?" asked Pierre.

"No, you idiot! Didn't I tell you it belongs to Madame de Meneval—no—to Captain de Meneval—oh, the devil!"

Such expletives as this had been strictly forbidden in the Rue Clarisse, and in spite of his annoyance Monsieur Bouchard felt a sense of pleasure in being able to call on the devil in a casual and informal manner.

"I understand, Monsieur," replied Pierre, with the wink that, like the grin, appeared to have become constitutional with him since his advent in the Rue Bassano. "The accidental Madame Vernet appears to have become accidentally possessed of a paste necklace that is not hers. Accidents will happen; but one acci-

dent that I am sure will not occur is the return of the necklace."

"Damnation!" roared Monsieur Bouchard. He felt a delicious relish in saying this profane word. It was the first time in his life he had ever used it.

"Very well, Monsieur. Damnation or no damnation, I will keep the necklace for you—if I get it."

Monsieur Bouchard dashed down the stairs faster than he had ever done in his life before. But on reaching the street and adopting a decorous pace, he thought, "Of course it's nonsense to suppose that she won't return it. The fact is, I have got to discipline that Pierre. He has altogether forgotten himself, and I shall have to teach him a few lessons."

Meanwhile, in the gay little apartment in the Avenue de l'Impératrice, where the de Meneval entourage was situated, the necklace had become a haunting ghost as well as in the Rue Bassano.

As Léontine and her husband sat opposite each other at breakfast in the pretty little *salle à manger*, each felt like a criminal. It was a very pretty little *salle à manger*—just the sort of room for a young couple with a modest income, yet sufficient to live on. But there is not a young couple in existence who, knowing that their income is cut exactly in half while the other half is saved up for them, would be satisfied with their moiety. This, however, was bliss compared to the prospect of that dreary little cottage in the country to which Papa Bouchard had condemned them—or rather, to which they had condemned each other—for each thought secretly that but for those unlucky debts and the diamond necklace, Papa Bouchard would never have been so hard on them. The most painful part of it was, however, the necessity of concealment each felt toward the other. They had, up to this time, lived their married life with the perfect frankness of two devoted young persons who love and confide in each other, and this was what it had come

to—bitterly thought de Meneval, who truly loved his pretty little wife—her diamonds practically put in pawn by him with that old curmudgeon, who had got thereby just the opportunity he wanted to exile them from Paris. All these thoughts chased through his mind as he looked at Léontine with a new and unpleasant conviction that he was a villain.

Léontine, for her part, felt a horrid heart-sickness when she remembered the paste necklace quietly reposing in the strong-box in her dressing-room, while Victor's wedding gift was in Papa Bouchard's strong-box in the Rue Bassano. And that dull little house in the country! It was she who had brought all this on Victor, and the thought filled her heart with remorseful tenderness toward her husband. She addressed him by the fondest names as she poured his coffee for him.

"And you have to go to that tiresome Melun to-day, to be away from me two whole days?"

"Yes," replied de Meneval. "How I wish you could go with me! I have often been sorry I gave up my quarters to accommodate Lefebvre, with his wife and four children to support on her *dot* and his captain's pay. I didn't mind living *en garçon* until I had a wife of my own."

It was quite true that de Meneval, out of generosity, had given up the best part of his quarters to his brother officer, and had not the heart to ask for them again, especially as he was generally supposed to be in the enjoyment of a large income.

"Don't say you are sorry, Victor. For my part, charming as it would be to stay at Melun with you, I am glad you can help the poor Lefebvres. We know what it is to want money, don't we?"

"Indeed we do."

"And our case is the harder that no one will believe we haven't the use of our money."

Léontine, who was delicate-minded, always called her money "our money," and de Meneval deeply and affectionately appreciated this.

"And it will be duller than ever at that odious little cottage in the suburbs of Melun."

"Oh, yes. Léontine, I am afraid it is I who have brought this on you."

"No, no, no—it is I, or rather Papa Bouchard's old-fashioned, stingy ideas. He has no notion of what a modern way of living costs."

"But he will find out in the Rue Bassano, if I'm not mistaken," said de Meneval, laughing suddenly.

Then there was a long pause, broken by Léontine's throwing down her napkin and crying out:

"I have an inspiration! We are so dull and disheartened to-day that nothing but a supper at the Pigeon House will cheer us up. You will take me there to-night. Remember, you promised me."

"Did I?" asked poor de Meneval. He was, in truth, afraid to show his face at the Pigeon House lest the head waiter should quietly tap him on the shoulder and ask him to step up to the bureau and pay nineteen hundred francs.

"And I must and will go this very evening!" cried Léontine, jumping up and running around to her husband's chair, where she proceeded to perch herself on the arm. "I know exactly how it can be done. I will take the eight o'clock train. You will meet me at the station. We will go to the Pigeon House, where you will secure a table in that charming terrace garden you have told me so much about. We will have a jolly little supper—and I'll pay for the champagne. No—no!" putting her hands over de Meneval's mouth. "And it will be such fun to watch the queer people passing in and out of the music hall!"

"Some of them," said de Meneval, with the hope of frightening Léontine, "are very queer indeed."

"Yes, yes, I know. You have often told me about the singers and dancers coming out there in their theatre clothes, and that's just what I want to see. And as for any impropriety—haven't I often heard you say that every one of those hard-working ballet

girls is supporting her bedridden parents, or crippled husband, or something of the sort?"

"I *did* say that many of them are honest and hard-working."

"I am sure of it! The mere fact that they work is enough. You know I have been studying sociology of late, and I know something about the working people." Léontine, as she said this, had an uncomfortable twinge when she remembered Putzki and Louise.

Now if anything in the world was calculated to make the bright June morning blacker than it was already to de Meneval, it was this sudden freak of Léontine's to go out to the Pigeon House to supper. He fidgeted in his chair, and hummed and ha'd, but Léontine prattled on, talking about the amusement she should have.

"And I shall at last meet Major Fallière! I am so anxious to know him, the dear old thing!"

"Fallière won't be at Melun to-night. He goes to Châlons on special duty to-day," cried de Meneval, seeing a gleam of hope. "Why not wait until he comes back—some time next week?"

"Oh, it is quite useless waiting for an officer. He may be snatched up at any time and packed off to the ends of the earth. And go to the Pigeon House to-night I shall, I will, I must—" she punctuated this sentence by giving de Meneval three charming kisses—"and if it's very improper, so much the better! I shall go to the Rue Clarisse and tell Aunt Céleste you forced me to go against my will, and so escape a scolding."

"That's all very well," replied poor de Meneval, "but how will you get back to-night? I can't leave—and I don't know of anyone returning to Paris."

"Don't bother your head about that. You will put me on the train at Melun—my maid will meet me at the St. Lazare station. What could be simpler? No, no, no! I shall sup with you to-night at the Pigeon House, so be sure and meet me at the station at

half-past eight o'clock—you have just time to make your train." And she flew into his room, brought out his helmet and sword—for he was in uniform, being ready to report for duty—and kissing him affectionately, pushed him out of the door. De Meneval ran down the stairs and, jumping into a cab, drove rapidly off. He waved his hand to Léontine, watching him from the balcony.

Deceits and concealments were a new burden for Léontine to carry, and she spent a wretched day. It was not improved by the behavior of Putzki or Louise when she went to see them, for both of them were dissatisfied with the small payment she could make, and did not relish the idea of Monsieur Bouchard, who was a terror to swindlers, going over their bills.

After these two unpleasant interviews Léontine drove to the Rue Clarisse. What a dismal old street it was, anyhow! Dark and dull and utterly without life—no wonder Papa Bouchard had tired of it and had levanted into a gayer precinct. When she was ushered into Mademoiselle Bouchard's dingy little drawing-room she found that good woman, Aunt Céleste, seated with one eye on her embroidery and the other on Élise, who was polishing up the already shining furniture. Aunt Céleste's usually placid face was troubled, but it lighted up when she saw the smiling Léontine running in. Aunt Céleste was really fond of the girl, albeit she was in chronic spasms over Léontine's modern, and to poor Mademoiselle Céleste's notion, outlandish ideas. Still, they really loved each other, and kissed affectionately.

"Well, Aunt Céleste, how do you stand Papa Bouchard's absence?" asked Léontine, jokingly, but not unkindly.

Mademoiselle Bouchard wagged her head disconsolately. "It is not how I stand it. It is how he, poor, dear boy, stands it. Who will look after his dinner and see that he has simple and wholesome food? Who will look to his flannels? Who will see that he

lays aside his books at ten o'clock and goes to bed, as he has always been accustomed?"

"It seems to me, Aunt Céleste, that as Papa Bouchard is fifty-four years of age he ought to know something about taking care of himself."

"But he doesn't. However, I have given him Pierre. I have the greatest confidence in Pierre. In thirty years I have never known him to be guilty of an indiscretion. He was very unwilling to go, poor fellow. He is truly attached to the quiet and decorum of the Rue Clarisse, and objected very much to the noise and bustle of the Rue Bassano, with so many theatres about and people turning night into day. I almost had to force him to go—but I did it on my poor, dear brother's account. Pierre is to come to see me every day to tell me just how the dear boy has passed his time."

Léontine sincerely hoped that Pierre would not think it necessary to mention her visit to Papa Bouchard the night before.

"And I have had another sorrow," continued poor Mademoiselle Bouchard. "My parrot—Pierrot—that I have had for seventeen years, and taught so many moral and useful aphorisms—he, too, has deserted me."

"All three of them vanished—like this—*pouf!*" Élise put in, with the freedom of an old servant. "Monsieur Bouchard, that good-for-nothing husband of mine and Pierrot—and all bent on mischief—that I'll swear to!"

Mademoiselle Bouchard proceeded to read Élise a lecture on the duties of the married state, among the first of which was the obligation of a wife to believe everything her husband tells her, at which Élise laughed grimly.

"Mademoiselle is joking, ha, ha!"

Although Mademoiselle Bouchard led so retired a life, she liked well enough to know what was going on in the outside world, if only to be shocked at it. So, when Léontine told her about the proposed supper at the Pigeon House that evening, Mademoiselle Bouchard was duly horrified,

terrified and mortified, but she did not forget to charge Léontine to come and tell her all the dreadful things she saw at that unconventional place.

Léontine, after spending the morning in the Rue Clarisse, returned to her own apartment in the Avenue de l'Impératrice. She was so dispirited at the contemplation of her own faults and Victor's supposed Spartan virtues that she had no heart to take her usual afternoon automobile excursion in the Bois de Boulogne—the automobile being one of the few indulgences she had been able to screw out of Papa Bouchard. She remained at home, therefore, until it was time to take the eight o'clock train for Melun. Then, taking her maid to the St. Lazare station, and directing her to be there when the eleven o'clock train from Melun returned, Léontine stepped into a first-class compartment, and was soon speeding toward Melun.

She wore a beautiful evening costume concealed by a long silk cloak, and a charming hat was perched on her dainty head. The thought in her tender little heart was of the pleasure her society would give her dear Victor.

But her dear Victor had spent the day in a manner not unlike her own. He had interviewed the proprietor of the Pigeon House and had given him assurances that the bill would be paid. The transaction had involved the mortifying admission that before the money was handed over Monsieur Bouchard would be out there himself to look into the matter, as if Captain de Meneval were a naughty schoolboy. The proprietor of the Pigeon House had scoffed heartlessly at this, and de Meneval had difficulty in keeping from knocking him down for his impudence. Then—Léontine's visit! What impish microbe had lodged in her head, inducing her to come out there? He knew her to be keen of wit, and it would be difficult to disguise from her his familiarity with the place. He might, it is true, say he knew little or nothing about it, but the waiters, especially one François, who knew his taste in wines and

cigars, fish and *entrées* and *hors d'œuvres* to a dot, would be sure to betray him. And then, the diamond necklace lay heavy on his heart and danced up and down before his eyes, for Victor de Meneval really loved his charming young wife, and argued to himself that if that stingy old hunk of a Papa Bouchard had not held him so tight the present predicament would not have existed.

However, time waits for no man; and when the eight o'clock train from Paris was due Captain de Meneval was at the little station waiting for it. And when it rolled in Léontine sprang gracefully out of her compartment.

As in the morning, each felt remorseful and penitent toward the other and tried to make up for the wrong that each had secretly done the other by renewed demonstrations of affection. When de Meneval escorted his charming wife across the street to the Pigeon House, which was only a step away, he paid her the prettiest and most loverlike compliments imaginable. Léontine responded with the sweetest smiles and the tenderest words; so that by the time they reached the terrace garden through a covered hedge next the Pigeon House itself, each felt like a thief and a murderer.

Léontine exclaimed with delight at the beauty of the terrace garden. It was indeed a pretty and cheerful place. It looked down straight into a little valley, an iron railing and a stone coping defining the terrace. Trees and shrubbery, pretty flower beds and a rustic arbor were lighted by incandescent lamps that gleamed softly in the purple glow of evening. The windows of the Pigeon House gave directly on the terrace, and already the glittering lights and the sounds of the orchestra showed that the performance was beginning. There were only a few persons scattered about, and the waiters were collected in groups, whispering, while waiting for customers. One, however—the identical François, whom de Meneval wished to avoid—ran forward and showed them a pleasant

table. He was in the act of saying, "What will Monsieur le Capitaine have?" when de Meneval, looking him straight in the face, though addressing Léontine, said:

"It's been so long since I've seen this place—not since our marriage, in fact—that I hardly know what it is like."

"Oho!" thought François, "that is your game, is it? Very well, Monsieur, I will help you out with it—for a consideration." Then, extending his hand for de Meneval's hat, he gave a slight but significant twitch of his fingers and palm, to which a ten-franc piece was the agreeable response. "Since Monsieur is evidently not familiar with this place," said the wily François, "perhaps he will allow me to recommend our white soup, to begin with."

"Thank you," replied de Meneval; "and can you also recommend this turbot on the menu?"

"Yes, Monsieur. If you had ever tasted our turbot you would never look at turbot outside of the Pigeon House."

"By the way, what is your name?"

"François, if you please."

François remembered a certain little supper at the Pigeon House the week before, when Captain de Meneval had not only forgotten François's name but his own as well, and so had several other very jolly officers. But François, though but a waiter, had the soul of a gentleman, and was nobly oblivious of ever having set eyes on Captain de Meneval before.

"Now, Victor," said Léontine, who had been studying over the wine list, "as I invited myself here to-night, I intend to be part host. I claim the right of providing the wine and cigars. They shall be of the best, as the best of husbands deserves." Then, turning to François, she said: "Your best Chambertin with the soup, and a bottle of this 1840 Bordeaux, and a bottle of Veuve Clicquot. Also, for Monsieur le Capitaine some of your Reina Regente cigars." Léontine returned to her study of the wine list and de Meneval and François exchanged

sympathetic grins. François vanished after having received a very expensive order.

Left to themselves, Léontine and Victor began to condole with each other on the prospect of their rustication.

"It is not for myself I grieve," declared Léontine; "it is for you, poor darling."

"Never mind me," protested de Meneval. "If only *you* were not condemned to that infernal little cottage! Well, we shall have one good dinner, anyhow, before we begin doing time, as it were."

And as they were exchanging their lugubrious confidences, a shriek of hoarse laughter resounded near them, and there on the arbor hung a cage with a parrot in it which Léontine immediately recognized as Pierrot. With gurgles of laughter Léontine told Victor of her visit to the Rue Clarisse that morning and of the flight of Pierrot, along with that of Papa Bouchard and Pierre.

"And I shall go to-morrow morning and tell Aunt Céleste that I have seen her dear Pierrot."

"It will be cruelty to animals to take the poor devil back to the Rue Clarisse," replied de Meneval.

François then returned with the soup and fish, both of which were excellent. De Meneval made a point of calling François "Louis" or "Adolphe" occasionally, and François never failed to respectfully correct him.

Meanwhile, sweet sounds of the orchestra and of singing floated out from the open windows of the Pigeon House. More people strolled on the terrace, including many officers of the garrison; and when the intermission came, a flock of girls, each escorted by a young man, generally an officer, came out, laughing and chattering, and took their places at the little tables. Some had only a glass of lemonade or wine, others had time for a pâté or some trifle of the kind. It was very pretty and picturesque, and Léontine, never having seen anything of the kind, was delighted.

De Meneval was in agony lest some of his friends among the ladies should recognize him, but they, being mostly decent and self-respecting women, though of a humble class, with true French politeness did not intrude themselves on his notice in any way. Nor was he anxious to begin a conversation with any of his brother officers, and carefully avoided noticing them beyond a bow, although many of them would have been glad of an introduction to his pretty young wife.

The dinner was outwardly very jolly, but the demon of remorse was at work within the breasts of both Victor and Léontine. Nevertheless, it did not affect their appetites, and François found he had a good deal to do. At last, however, coffee was served, and just as Léontine put down her cup a scream from the parrot resounded.

"Ah, there you are, Papa Bouchard! Up to mischief, eh, Papa Bouchard! Bad boy Bouchard!"

Now these were some of the phrases that Léontine herself, during her sojourn in the Rue Clarisse, had taught the parrot, much to her own and Papa Bouchard's amusement. The wicked bird remembered them most inopportunistly, for there was Papa Bouchard himself strolling into the garden.

"Good heavens!" cried de Meneval. "We can't afford to let Papa Bouchard see us out here. We should be sent into retirement to-morrow morning!" And obeying a mutual impulse, these two graceless creatures flew round the corner of the arbor, where they could see without being seen.

Monsieur Bouchard entered with an air of affected jauntiness which went very well with the extreme youthfulness of his attire. Apparently he had thrown all his old clothes to the winds, along with his discretion, when he decamped from the Rue Clarisse. He wore an extremely youthful suit of light gray, with a flaming necktie, a collar that nearly cut his ears off, and a watch chain that would have answered either for a watch or a dog. A huge red rose decorated his lapel, and

his scanty hair, when he removed his hat, showed marks of the curling-iron.

At the first shriek from the parrot Papa Bouchard started apprehensively. The waiters—a shrewd and vexatious lot, who never fail to notice all the slips of elderly gentlemen—immediately jumped to the right conclusion, that the elderly gentleman in youthful attire was an old acquaintance of the newly acquired parrot. Monsieur Bouchard felt, rather than saw, a simultaneous snicker go round, and rightly concluding that the best thing to do was to ignore the wicked Pierrot, walked away from the arbor, and seating himself at a table some distance away, pulled out of his pocket the *Journal des Débats* and read it diligently. The parrot, however, delighted to find an old acquaintance among so many new faces, continued to call out, at intervals, various remarks to Papa Bouchard, such as "Does the old lady know you're out?" "Oh, you are a gay bird, Papa Bouchard!" and always winding up, like a Greek chorus, with "Bad boy Bouchard!"

Presently a waiter approached and asked Monsieur Bouchard politely what he wished to be served with, and before he could ask for his usual drink, a little sugared water, the diabolical Pierrot screeched out, "An American cocktail!" which the bird pronounced "cockee-tailee." Papa Bouchard scowled. This was very annoying.

"A little sugared water, if you please," he replied to the waiter, and the bird, on hearing it, burst into a screech of hoarse laughter.

Monsieur Bouchard laid down his newspaper and looked about him with curiosity not unmixed with gratification. Everything seemed extremely jolly—these places were undoubtedly pleasant, and he was not so much surprised as he had been at de Meneval's fondness for it. At that very moment de Meneval and Léontine were watching him and counting the chances of slipping out without being caught. But Papa Bouchard, quite

unconscious of this, was becoming more and more interested in what was going on before him and around him. "At these places, though," he was thinking, "one should have a companion—a person of the other sex—someone to help one enjoy—it's dreary trying to be happy alone." And as if in answer to his thought, he saw, entering the garden in both haste and embarrassment, the charming Madame Vernet.

Now a curious thing happened—a psychologic mystery. All day long Monsieur Bouchard had been haunted and troubled by the thought of Madame Vernet and the paste necklace. She had not returned it. So much he knew from his first look at Pierre's countenance when he had got home that afternoon. But the minute he saw the lady herself, in his pleased flutter and twitter of enjoyment, the necklace vanished from his consciousness; he remembered only that she was pretty, she was young, she was demure and she was easily alarmed. In fact, Madame Vernet appeared to be scared half to death at this very instant, and as soon as she caught sight of Monsieur Bouchard she fled toward him like a frightened bird.

"Oh, Monsieur Bouchard!" she said, panting and agitated, "how relieved I am to find you here! I had an appointment to meet my uncle and aunt here—you remember I told you I had an uncle and aunt living at Melun whom I often visited—and not seeing them outside I took it for granted they were inside, and so came in. I felt terribly embarrassed—I am so diffident, you know—at entering such a place alone, but I expected every moment to see them, and when I did not I thought I should have fainted from sheer terror—you can't imagine what a timid little thing I am—and then my eyes fell on you, and I said to myself: 'There is that dear, good, handsome Monsieur Bouchard—he is the very man to take care of a poor, terrified woman'—and so I ran to you." Madame Vernet dropped on a chair at Monsieur Bouchard's table.

What man with a soul as big as the

head of a pin could refuse succor to a pretty woman under these circumstances! Not Papa Bouchard.

"My dear Madame Vernet," he said, "pray compose yourself. I will take care of you until your uncle and aunt arrive."

Madame Vernet looked around apprehensively.

"I don't see my uncle and aunt," she murmured—which was perfectly true—"and I am afraid, very much afraid, Monsieur Bouchard, that your youthful appearance really unfits you for the office of chaperon."

Oh, how happy was Papa Bouchard at that! With liberty seemed to have come youth—with youth should come champagne. Papa Bouchard called the waiter back and changed his order from a glass of sugared water to a quart of extra dry Veuve Clicquot.

"Now," said he, playfully taking up Madame Vernet's fan, "don't worry your little head about your uncle and aunt. I'll be your uncle and aunt for this evening. I'm sure I have been told by a number of persons—members of my own family—that the Pigeon House is a perfectly respectable place. So let us have a pleasant evening here, and I will take you back to Paris by the eleven o'clock train."

"Oh, Monsieur Bouchard, there is nothing I should like better, but I am afraid——"

"Don't, don't be afraid. There isn't the least chance of anyone I know turning up. I have a young jackanapes of a family connection stationed here—a young officer—but I think I have pretty effectually shut the door of the Pigeon House in *his* face."

At that very moment this young jackanapes of an officer was watching and listening to Papa Bouchard with the most entrancing delight. So was Léontine, who could not refrain from pinching de Meneval in her ecstasy. The enjoyment of these two young scapegraces was enhanced at this very moment by the parrot screaming out:

"Oh, naughty old Bouchard! I'll

tell the old lady! Bad boy Bouchard!"

Madame Vernet started and looked inquiringly at the bird. Papa Bouchard was seriously vexed.

"Pray," he said, in an annoyed voice, "don't pay any attention to that ridiculous bird. I always thought parrots were the incarnation of the devil. I can't imagine how the creature found out my name. At all events," he added, tenderly, "neither bird nor devil, neither man nor woman, not even your aunt and uncle, can spoil the evening for us."

"I don't think my aunt and uncle can be coming," replied Madame Vernet. And she spoke the truth.

"So much the better," whispered Papa Bouchard.

The waiter, the same astute François who had waited on de Meneval and Léontine, now appeared with the champagne. Monsieur Bouchard had not thought of ordering anything to eat, but when this artful François said to him, "Did Monsieur ask for a menu card?" Monsieur Bouchard replied, promptly, "Certainly I did."

The menu was brought, and Monsieur Bouchard, with his head close to Madame Vernet's, studied it attentively. His order as finally made out would have caused an earthquake in the Rue Clarisse. He ordered everything that had been strictly forbidden during the last thirty years. The order bore, too, a really remarkable resemblance to the one given by the de Menevals, except that those happy-go-lucky young people had not the money to pay for it, and Monsieur Bouchard had.

Never in all his life had Papa Bouchard enjoyed a supper as much as that one. He was at perfect liberty to eat and drink all the things that were certain to make him feel ill the next day, a prerogative dear to a man's heart. He had a charming woman opposite him, and a waiter who fairly overwhelmed him with attentions. Without an order from Monsieur Bouchard, François produced the wine appropriate to every course, and instead of being frowned

on was rewarded for it. But in spite of white wines and red wines, Papa Bouchard stuck pretty close to the champagne, which speedily got into his tongue and his eyes as well as into his blood. It was the champagne that made him squeeze Madame Vernet's hand under the table, wink at François and kiss his fingers to one of the young ladies of the ballet, who responded by playfully throwing a bouquet to him which hit him on the nose. In fact, his enjoyment would have been entirely without alloy but for Pierrot, who, slyly inspired by the waiters, kept up a running fire of remarks, always ending in a shrill laugh and a yell of "Bad boy Bouchard!"

If Pierrot bothered Papa Bouchard slightly, he added immensely to the suppressed gaiety of the two listeners, de Meneval and Léontine, and they went off into spasms of silent laughter whenever Pierrot screamed out any appropriate remark.

Papa Bouchard, however, got a good deal of solid enjoyment out of his supper in spite of his old friend of the Rue Clarisse, and Pierrot did not interfere in the least with Madame Vernet's pleasure.

"The fact is," said Monsieur Bouchard, confidentially, to Madame Vernet, after the third glass of champagne, "I wasn't quite candid about that devilish bird." Papa Bouchard used this wicked word with the greatest relish. "It belonged to my sister—older than I—who brought me up in the way I should go, and a deuced dull and uncomfortable way it was! A day or two ago, Pierrot—that's the parrot's name—got tired of the propriety and seclusion of the Rue Clarisse, where we have lived for thirty years, just as Pierre, my manservant, did, and I myself. All at once, without previous consultation, Pierre, Pierrot and I levanted, so to speak. Pierrot has evidently got caught—which is more than I intend to be—but I'm sure he finds the Pigeon House a great improvement on the Rue Clarisse, and I haven't

the heart to return him there. You don't know how pleasant it is to be living in the Rue Bassano after thirty years in the Rue Clarisse. And to be my own man, instead of my sister's—excellent woman she is, excellent, but she doesn't understand what a young man of the present day—er—I mean a man with the feelings of youth, requires to make him happy. So that's why I eloped."

"It's a great mistake not to give a man his head sometimes," added Madame Vernet, with one of her gentle and winning smiles.

"Yes, yes, yes. You know how to manage a man, I see."

"I manage a man!" cried Madame Vernet. "Pray don't say that. The idea of my managing a great, strong man! No, indeed! All I should ask of a man is that he would manage me—and I'm sure, as yielding as I am, nothing would be easier."

At which François, behind Monsieur Bouchard's chair, doubled up with laughter, and Léontine had to fan de Meneval, who appeared to be choking in an agony of enjoyment, while Pierrot varied his performance by beginning to sing the song from the opera, "Ah, I have sighed to rest me!"

"Well," continued Papa Bouchard, whose *bonhomie* increased with every sip of champagne, "I suppose I shall have to manage a woman some day, for, to be very confidential, my dear Madame Vernet, I am in an excellent position to marry, and after a while I think I shall not be satisfied with liberty. I shall want power, too—the power of controlling another destiny, another heart, another will besides my own; so I shall marry a wife." Papa Bouchard said this with an air of the greatest determination, swelling out his waistcoat, and at the same moment the parrot shrieked out laughing, "Oh, how funny!"

"What's that? What's that?" cried Monsieur Bouchard, indignantly, turning to François. He was a little confused by the champagne and Madame Vernet's bright eyes.

"If you please, Monsieur, it is that

troublesome parrot. I shall tell the proprietor how very annoying the bird is—he has only just got it—and I am sure to-morrow morning it will be sent away."

Monsieur Bouchard had to be satisfied with this. His enjoyment, however, was now too deep for Pierrot to ruffle except for a moment. Monsieur Bouchard was living—living cycles of time, and life was taking on a color, an exuberance, a melody that quite turned his otherwise excellent head. He was delighted with Madame Vernet's exposition of her inability and indisposition to manage a man. "That's the sort of wife I'll have when I marry," he thought to himself, taking another shy at the champagne. "None of your managing sort—I've been managed too much already, heaven knows." And inspired by these pleasing reflections, he said, tenderly, to Madame Vernet, offering her his arm:

"Come, Madame, let us take a little stroll in search of your uncle and aunt. Do you see that sweet, retired little alley, all roses and myrtles and honeysuckles, with a lot of cooing pigeons nestling among them? Perhaps we may find your uncle and aunt amid the roses."

Madame Vernet hung her head, but Papa Bouchard insisted. When at last she rose she threw aside the graceful little wrap round her shoulders, and there, gleaming on her throat, was the paste necklace.

Monsieur Bouchard received a distinct and unpleasant shock as he recognized the troublesome object, and he was nowise relieved by Madame Vernet saying, in her softest and most insinuating manner:

"How charming it was of you to give me this lovely ornament!"

Monsieur Bouchard would have dropped Madame Vernet's arm, but she held on to him. This was certainly a very disagreeable incident. He had not given her the necklace—he never dreamed of giving it to her—he had been very much annoyed at her failure to return it, and . . .

But what were Monsieur Bouchard's

feelings in comparison with those of Léontine and de Meneval, both of whom were watching every movement of Papa Bouchard and Madame Vernet? Their laughing faces changed like magic. They stood—Léontine and Victor—horror-stricken, and as if turned to stone, each pale, trembling and afraid to meet the eye of the other. But as, after a minute or two of agonized surprise, they began to recover from the first shock of their discovery, they felt the necessity of concealing their feelings from each other, and at the same time not losing sight of the twenty-thousand-franc necklace.

Léontine, womanlike, was the first to rally. She was quite pale—de Meneval was not sure whether she had recognized the necklace or not, and he was afraid to ask. Her voice trembled slightly as she said:

"I think I'll go and speak to Papa Bouchard. It will be such—such fun to let him know we have been watching him all the time."

Out of sheer stupidity, and being thoroughly disconcerted, de Meneval walked along with her toward Monsieur Bouchard and Madame Vernet. Léontine jumped to the conclusion that he suspected something. So she stopped short and said, in a voice that she vainly tried to make laughing and merry:

"Let me have Papa Bouchard to myself—it will be the more amusing if you appear later on."

"Certainly," replied de Meneval, and continued to walk with her toward Papa Bouchard and Madame Vernet. The fact is, he had not heard a word of what Léontine was saying. Papa Bouchard was standing in front of Madame Vernet, and his countenance showed that all was not at ease within. She had asked him to button her glove, and he could not well refuse, but the sight of the necklace was rather trying to his nerves. And in the midst of it appeared the two human beings he least desired to see on earth—Léontine and de Meneval!

The three stood looking at each

other like a trio of criminals. Madame Vernet, the blushing, the bashful, the diffident, was the only one of the four who was not cruelly embarrassed. And then, besides the infernal necklace—for so Papa Bouchard characterized it in his new vocabulary—the idea of being caught supping with a lady at the Pigeon House! Suppose those two scamps should fly off to the Rue Clarisse with the gruesome tale—and he didn't know exactly how much champagne he had taken, only his head was buzzing a little—poor, poor Papa Bouchard! However, it would never do to show the white feather in the beginning; the champagne had given him some Dutch courage, but it did not supply him with any judgment, for his first remark was about the most indiscreet he could have made. Assuming, or trying to assume, his usual authoritative air, he said to de Meneval:

"Monsieur le Capitaine, I thought there was a distinct understanding between us that there were to be no more suppers at the Pigeon House. And bringing your wife to this place——"

"I know of no such understanding, Monsieur Bouchard," replied de Meneval, with some spirit. "I deny your right, or that of any other man, to say where I shall have supper with my wife. If the Pigeon House is proper enough for you and this lady——" de Meneval indicated Madame Vernet, who, with her usual bashfulness, had retired a little—"whom I overheard just now thanking you for the superb necklace she wears, it is assuredly proper for me and for my wife."

This was unanswerable logic, and Papa Bouchard was momentarily staggered by it. De Meneval followed up his advantage by saying, significantly, "To-morrow morning I shall come to see you, and you will kindly explain to me some mysteries concerning——" De Meneval stopped short; he could not speak his mind to Monsieur Bouchard without letting the terrible and menacing cat out of the bag regarding the necklace.

It was now Léontine's turn at the poor gentleman.

"Come, Papa Bouchard," she said, with pallid lips, but affecting to laugh, "you must not scold Victor for bringing me here. I really made him do it. But I want to speak to you a moment in that sweet, sequestered arbor, where you told this lady just now she might find her uncle and aunt, amid the roses and honeysuckles and the little cooing pigeons."

Monsieur Bouchard would much rather have gone off with a gendarme at that very moment, but Léontine had him by the arm, and was determinedly dragging him away. An anxious grin appeared on his countenance as he turned to Madame Vernet and said:

"One moment, Madame, and I will return."

"Only a moment, remember," answered the bashful creature.

Madame Vernet had not the slightest objection to being left in charge of this good-looking young officer. She cast down her eyes and began to murmur something about her timidity, when she was brought up all standing by de Meneval saying:

"Madame, a few minutes ago I overheard you thanking Monsieur Bouchard for that superb necklace you wear."

Madame Vernet smiled. Superb necklace, indeed! It must be a fine imitation.

"But," continued de Meneval, "that necklace belongs to my wife, Madame de Meneval. I myself selected it, and paid twenty thousand francs for it. Last night I left it in Monsieur Bouchard's care in the Rue Bassano. To-night I find you, a woman with whom, I am sure, Monsieur Bouchard has a very casual acquaintance, wearing my wife's twenty-thousand-franc necklace. You will admit that the circumstances justify me in demanding it."

"Monsieur," replied Madame Vernet, "this necklace is paste. It cost only seventy-five francs. I have Monsieur Bouchard's word for it."

"The old sinner! Well, Monsieur

Bouchard wasn't saying his prayers when he told you that. I tell you the stones are real, and unless you hand the necklace over to me this instant I shall telephone for a couple of policemen—there is a police station not two minutes away—and to-morrow morning you and Monsieur Bouchard can explain the matter in the police court."

Now, Madame Vernet was really as brave as a lion. She suspected at once that she had got hold of something of real value, and she determined to hold on to it and get away with it; hence nothing could have been more pleasing to her at that moment than to have de Meneval out of the way for a few moments—even to fetch a policeman—so she merely replied, with calm assurance:

"Do as you like, Monsieur. I never saw you before—I hope I shall never see you again. My protector is at hand, and when you arrive with your police officers it is Monsieur Bouchard with whom you will have to settle."

De Meneval turned and ran out of the garden toward the police station. He thought that exposure was coming anyhow, and he would better secure the stakes in the game. As he rushed out he caromed against a very well dressed, portly, clean-shaven, elderly gentleman who was parading into the garden with a great air of pomposity. In his hand he held conspicuously a newspaper, on the first page of which was a large photogravure easily recognizable as himself, and under it, in letters an inch long, were the words, "Dr. Delcasse. The most celebrated alienist in Paris." Below this was the cut of a handsome building, and under this was inscribed, "The Private Sanatorium at Melun of Dr. Delcasse."

Dr. Delcasse seemed to feel the injury to his dignity very much when de Meneval jostled by him so unceremoniously, nearly knocking him down. He stopped, scowled, growled, and then, with a portentous air of being much displeased, stalked forward, took a seat close to where Madame

Vernet was standing, and began pompously to unfold his newspaper, always keeping the picture to his audience, so to speak—which audience consisted solely of Madame Vernet.

Now, for quickness and boldness of resource Madame Vernet was fully the equal of de Meneval or any man alive, and the moment she became convinced of the identity of Dr. Delcasse a plan was formed in her mind. Everybody knew Dr. Delcasse, and also of the war waged between him and Dr. Vignaud, another celebrated alienist, which, if carried to extremes, would have resulted in locking up half the population of Paris as lunatics either in Dr. Delcasse's sanatorium at Melun or Dr. Vignaud's private hospital in Paris.

Madame Vernet realized, in her brilliant scheme, the value of time. There was a train leaving for Paris in ten minutes. If she could but make the first train, getting away before Monsieur Bouchard returned! She determined to at least try for it. She came near to Dr. Delcasse, and said, in a silvery voice:

"May I ask if this is not the renowned Dr. Delcasse—the man who has restored the largest number of persons, cured and sane, to their families, of any doctor for the insane in the whole world?"

To this insinuating address from a remarkably pretty and attractive woman Dr. Delcasse, as would any other man, felt a warming of the heart, and he replied, rising politely:

"You flatter me. I *am* Dr. Delcasse."

"Then," cried Madame Vernet, taking out her handkerchief and preparing to weep, "you are the man I most desire to meet. Oh, how fortunate it is for me that you are here! I have a brother with me—a dear, good young man, but whose mind has been affected ever since a fall he had from an apricot tree some years ago. For a year I had him at Dr. Vignaud's hospital for the insane—rightly named, for I think anyone who went there would shortly be insane. Dr. Vignaud

is a charlatan of the worst description." Dr. Delcasse smiled in a superior manner to hear himself praised and Dr. Vignaud reviled—how delicious! "I am my poor brother's guardian," continued Madame Vernet, producing her card, inscribed "Madame Vernet, *née* Brion." "My brother's name is Louis Brion. Ever since he was released from Dr. Vignaud's asylum he has been much crazier than when he went in, although Dr. Vignaud declared him thoroughly cured."

"Just like Vignaud!" remarked Dr. Delcasse, with that spirit of fraternity which sometimes distinguishes the medical profession.

"This evening," continued Madame Vernet, throwing her most pleading and fascinating look into her eyes, "I brought my poor, dear brother out to this place to supper, thinking it would divert him. But he has been quite insane in all his actions, and just now he became violent. He took it into his head that this necklace I wear—which I may say to you confidentially is paste—is real, and is worth twenty thousand francs, and that I have stolen it from his wife. The poor boy has no wife. And while I was trying to soothe him just now he suddenly broke away, nearly knocking you down as you came in, and declared he was going after the police to arrest me—*me*, his devoted sister!" Madame Vernet's voice became lost in her lace handkerchief.

"I saw an unmistakable gleam of insanity in his eye as he rushed by me," said Dr. Delcasse, promptly. "My experience, Madame, has been vast. I can tell an insane patient at a glance, and I have no hesitation in saying that the young man gave every indication to a practiced eye of being, as you say, very much unbalanced. And Vignaud said he was cured! Ha, ha!"

"But the great thing," said Madame Vernet, with real and not pretended anxiety, "is to get him away from here without scandal, and into your sanatorium, where I wish to place him under your care. How can that be managed?"

"Nothing easier, Madame," replied Dr. Delcasse, eager to get hold of one of Dr. Vignaud's patients. "I am well known here—indeed, I am personally acquainted with many of our police officers. When the young man returns with the officers I shall simply, with your permission, direct them to convey him to my sanatorium—it is less than half a mile from here—and I will telephone to my assistant to have a strait-jacket, a padded cell and a cold douche ready for the unfortunate young man, and we will take care of him, never fear. When I release him, depend upon it, he will be actually cured. I am not Dr. Vignaud, I beg you to believe."

At this moment de Meneval, with a couple of officers, was entering the garden. The police station, as he had said, was but two minutes away. Dr. Delcasse, accompanied by Madame Vernet, coolly advanced, and recognizing the officers, spoke to them civilly, saying:

"Good-evening, Lestocq; good-evening, Caron." And then to de Meneval he said, soothingly: "Good-evening, Monsieur Brion. I am pleased to see you and your charming sister at Melun, and think you will enjoy your stay with me."

De Meneval looked from one to the other in amazement, and opened his mouth to speak; but before he could get out a word Madame Vernet laid her hand on his arm and said, in the tone of soothing a raving lunatic:

"Yes, dear Louis, Dr. Delcasse will take the best possible care of you, and I will come out to see you every week."

De Meneval found his tongue then.

"To the devil with Dr. Delcasse! I never heard of him before. Police, arrest this woman. I can prove by my wife and by a gentleman now in this garden that the diamond necklace this person wears is the property of my wife."

"Do nothing of the kind," interrupted Dr. Delcasse, with quiet authority. "This young man, Louis Brion, is the brother of this lady, Madame Vernet. He is demented,

and his latest hallucination is that Madame Vernet has stolen the necklace she wears; that it is worth twenty thousand francs, that she stole it from his wife—and he has no wife."

"But I tell you," shouted de Meneval, quite beside himself, "that I never saw this woman before. She has my wife's diamond necklace, and I can prove it. Call Monsieur Bouchard!"

"You see how it is," coolly remarked Dr. Delcasse to the two police officers, "the only thing is to get him out of the way as quietly as possible. I shall take him at once out to my sanatorium, where I shall have a strait-jacket, a padded cell and a cold douche waiting for him."

With this the doctor suddenly whipped out his silk handkerchief, and with the greatest ingenuity bound it fast round de Meneval's mouth, so that he was completely gagged and silenced. The police officers seized him and dragged him out, under Dr. Delcasse's direction. De Meneval fought like a tiger, but it was one to three. The struggle, though violent, was noiseless, and before the two or three waiters in the vicinity realized what was going on everything was over, and Madame Vernet, picking up her gloves, fan and other belongings, scurried off another way to make the ten o'clock train.

Meanwhile, the interview between Papa Bouchard and Léontine had been stormy. Léontine had demanded an explanation, but Papa Bouchard had no satisfactory one to give. At first he mounted his high horse, declared Léontine's suspicions intolerable, and refused to discuss the subject of the necklace at all. But she was not so easily put off.

"If you refuse me an explanation," she said at last, "I shall simply confess all to Victor, and you will have to treat with a man instead of a woman."

"Do; confess all to Victor," replied Papa Bouchard, tartly. "Tell him that sociological yarn you told me. But remember one thing—your confessing all to Victor won't get your debts paid."

At this Léontine burst into tears, which partially softened Monsieur Bouchard, who really had a good heart.

"Come, come, now," he said. "You had better take my word for it when I tell you that, in spite of appearances, your necklace is safe. I can't and won't tell you the circumstances—you and de Meneval would both blazon it over Paris, and it would be devilish uncomfortable—" Papa Bouchard was becoming expert in the use of bad language—"it would be devilish uncomfortable for me. I can straighten the whole thing out in a few days, if you will only keep quiet. *Can't* you keep quiet?"

"I'll try to," was poor Léontine's response, and with this meagre satisfaction Papa Bouchard persuaded her to return to the garden. He was exceedingly eager to get back; he had a suspicion that Madame Vernet was anxious to get out of the way. In the perplexities and annoyances of the last half-hour he had made up his mind that it was absolutely necessary to get that diabolical necklace back, and to work himself out of the scrape in which he unexpectedly found himself.

As soon as he returned to the garden he looked around keenly for Madame Vernet, but she was nowhere to be seen. He called up François, who reported that Madame Vernet had gone out in a great hurry. There was a train for Paris just leaving. It struck him Madame was trying to make that train. Such was precisely Monsieur Bouchard's idea. Her departure in this way seriously annoyed and alarmed him. One thing, however, was clear in his mind—he must get back to Paris as soon as possible. There was another train in twenty minutes, and then there would be no more till eleven.

De Meneval's disappearance was also strange, but just as Léontine was beginning to feel uncomfortable she saw de Meneval approaching. Something had evidently happened. He looked angry and excited, and his usually immaculate dress showed that

he had been in a scrimmage. By his side walked the portly, the imposing Dr. Delcasse. The doctor was apologizing to de Meneval with the utmost earnestness.

"My dear sir, I beg you will believe it was a most extraordinary mistake——"

"*Very* extraordinary!" replied de Meneval, grinding his teeth with rage.

"If I had succeeded in getting you into my sanatorium you would have found every comfort awaiting you."

"Yes, a strait-jacket, a cold douche and a padded cell, as you kindly promised me."

"May I ask, Monsieur, that you will not spread this unfortunate story abroad in Paris?"

"I shall have it printed in every newspaper in Paris to-morrow morning, and I shall myself write to Dr. Vignaud, giving him a detailed account of the affair."

"Good heavens!"

"And if insanity ever develops in my family, it is Dr. Vignaud who shall treat every case—every case, do you hear?"

"Then, sir," said Dr. Delcasse, angrily, "all I have to say is that Dr. Vignaud will find his first patient in you—and I have the honor to bid you good-evening."

"Go to the devil!"

Dr. Delcasse, slapping his hat down angrily on his head, marched indignantly out, and de Meneval, still furious at the treatment to which he had been subjected, poured out his injuries:

"And but for having been recognized by some of the waiters as I was being dragged away I should at this moment be an inmate of a lunatic asylum, sent there by the wiles of a shameless adventuress, brought to the Pigeon House by Monsieur Bouchard." This was de Meneval's exact language.

"Take care, sir; take care!" cried Papa Bouchard, in a voice trembling with wrath. He was not accustomed to being talked to in that manner. "You may repent of this language. Madame Vernet is a lady of means

and respectability. I did not bring her out here. She came expecting to find here her uncle and aunt, who live in Melun. I invited her to sup in a public place, as any gentleman is authorized to do in the case of a widow old enough to take care of herself, and because your suspicions were excited by her having on a necklace like that you bought for your wife, you proceeded to make trouble. Well, it seems she turned the tables on you very cleverly, and no doubt, being a bashful little thing, she dreaded the sensation it would make and the notoriety that might follow, and—and so, naturally, has gone." Then, turning to Léontine, Papa Bouchard played his trump card. "Haven't you your diamond necklace safe at home, Léontine?"

To which Léontine faltered: "Y—y—yes, Papa Bouchard."

"Well, then," cried Papa Bouchard, assuming an air of triumphant virtue to poor de Meneval, "I hope you see the enormity of your conduct."

"I can't say I do," sullenly replied de Meneval.

"Very well, very well," continued Papa Bouchard, realizing that he held all the trumps in the game. "Do you want to go into the whole business of this necklace? If you do there is no time like the present. Do you, Léontine, want the matter sifted to the bottom?"

De Meneval remained gloomily silent, while Léontine murmured, "N—no, Papa Bouchard."

Papa Bouchard, having thus effectually silenced both of them, felt master of the situation, but all the same, he was desperately anxious to reach Paris before the de Menevals, so that he could get on Madame Vernet's track before they should. He was pretty sure that she could not get away from her apartment without leaving some trace. There was another train going almost immediately, and there would be no more till eleven o'clock. It would be exceedingly convenient for him to get an hour's start of the de Menevals. So it occurred to him that if he were

to propose a little more champagne Léontine and de Meneval would never run away and leave it, but *he* could and would.

"Now," said he, with an air of benevolence, "everything having been straightened out about the necklace, suppose we crack a bottle of champagne before returning to Paris. Here, waiter!"

François immediately responded with a bottle of champagne.

De Meneval had never supposed that anything would be too pressing to drag him away from good champagne, but he inwardly swore, as Léontine silently fretted, at the delay that might prevent him from making the next train to Paris. Both of them gulped down the champagne rather than drank it, while Papa Bouchard, alleging that he had already taken several glasses, declined any more. Every moment or two he looked at his watch, and he said to Léontine:

"Will you be going back to Paris to-night, Léontine?"

"Indeed I shall," eagerly replied Léontine. "I shall go back with you."

"But I sha'n't be going back till the midnight train. You see I am beginning to keep late hours, to make up for lost time, and that will be too late for you. Why can't you remain at de Meneval's quarters?"

"I have an engagement early to-morrow morning," replied Léontine, who was determined to get to Paris as quickly as she could and make some private inquiries on her own account concerning Madame Vernet. The same intention was fixed in de Meneval's mind. Therefore he said:

"Never mind, Léontine; I am off duty till twelve o'clock to-morrow, and I will take you to Paris to-night, if you wish."

At which Léontine, looking very blank, replied:

"Oh, very well. That will be nice."

"Now why are you in such a hurry to get to Paris?" asked Papa Bouchard. "The next train is always crowded—not a seat to be had in a first-class

compartment for love or money, and it makes a stop of only two minutes and a half; unless one is already at the station it is almost impossible to make it, and you see it is now within a few minutes of the train."

While Monsieur Bouchard was speaking he was putting on his gloves and making for the garden door, and the de Menevals, each carefully avoiding an appearance of haste, were following him. Everybody had forgotten that the champagne was not paid for, except François.

"So," kept on Papa Bouchard, still edging away, "you will go by the late train; perhaps I'll wait for it myself."

At that moment the shriek of the locomotive resounded. Immediately all pretense of waiting for the other train vanished. All three of them bolted for the exit to the garden. François rushed after them, bawling, "Your bill, Monsieur—the champagne—and the tip—" while the parrot, suddenly wakened from a nap, uttered a screech of hoarse laughter and began to yell after Papa Bouchard's rapidly retreating figure:

"Bad boy Bouchard! bad boy Bouchard!"

III

ANYONE who saw Monsieur Bouchard a week after his adventures at the Pigeon House would have said that the excellent man had grown ten years older in that time. For he had endured more cares, anxieties, worries, vexations, apprehensions and palpitations in that one week in the Rue Bassano than in all his thirty years in the Rue Clarisse. Not that Monsieur Bouchard had the slightest desire to go back to his old life. Not at all. In the Rue Bassano he at least lived; in the Rue Clarisse he had merely vegetated.

In the first place, on his arrival at his apartment shortly after midnight on that fateful evening spent at Melun he had been unable to find out anything at all about Madame Vernet. The *concièrge* had gone to

bed when he got home, and he dared not disturb the whole house at that hour. He spent a sleepless night, with Pierre snoring peacefully in the next room. The fellow had not come home till two o'clock in the morning. Monsieur Bouchard utilized the watches of the night in making up a story to tell the *concièrge* to account for the inquiries he meant to make concerning Madame Vernet. A *concièrge*, he well knew, is the nearest approach to an omniscient being on this planet. It was comparatively easy to concoct a tale that would go on four legs, in the expressive phrase of his countrymen—Monsieur Bouchard was greatly pleased with his shrewdness when he paused to think of the facility with which he invented his story—but to get it accepted at its face value—ah, that was another thing.

At six o'clock in the morning he tiptoed down stairs in his dressing gown and slippers. The *concièrge*, yawning, was just opening the shutters in her little den.

"Can you tell me, my good woman," said Monsieur Bouchard, in a manner calculated to allay any suspicions the *concièrge* might have—if anything can allay the suspicions of a *concièrge*—"whether Madame Vernet arrived here last night—in fact, if she is in the house at present? I ask because I promised her aunt and uncle out at Melun last evening to escort her in, and by some accident we became separated in the railway station, and I am considering what apology I shall make to her aunt and uncle—very worthy people at Melun."

The *concièrge* looked at poor Monsieur Bouchard, not with suspicion, but with certainty in her eye. The very expression of her face called him a liar and a villain, as she replied, coolly:

"Madame Vernet *did* come in last night and left the house at five o'clock this morning, to visit her aunt and uncle at Châlons."

By which Monsieur Bouchard, who was no fool, found out three things:

first, that Madame Vernet had been beforehand with the *concièrge*; second, that Madame Vernet did not have an aunt and uncle at Châlons, although she seemed to have uncles and aunts in every town, village and hamlet in France; and third, that wherever she might be she certainly was not at Châlons.

He spent the next three days in vain efforts to find out Madame Vernet's whereabouts. The *concièrge* had evidently been thoroughly bought and coached, and would absolutely tell nothing. Madame Vernet had taken her apartment by the month, and had paid in advance. The *concièrge* knew no more. Not even a ten-franc piece could screw any additional information out of her.

Papa Bouchard began to feel a little frightened. What would happen if it should come out in the newspapers, for example, that he, Monsieur Paul Bouchard, advocate, had given away the duplicate of his ward's necklace to this person? For he was then beginning to have some doubts of Madame Vernet, diffident and retiring though she might be. When this thought occurred to him he bit the pillows in his anguish—it was in the middle of one of his sleepless nights. And what glee would those laughing devils of newspaper men have out of him! And how should he ever show his face in the Rue Clarisse? Monsieur Bouchard made up his mind that if ever the thing got into the newspapers he should emigrate to Tonquin.

Of course, Pierre knew all about it. Monsieur Bouchard had told him too much not to tell him more. Pierre was only moderately sympathetic, which infuriated Monsieur Bouchard.

"At least," cried the poor gentleman, "those two scamps, Léontine and de Meneval, are in as much trouble as I am."

"But they have the necklace," replied Pierre, "and it seems to me that Monsieur is in a jolly hole, with his necklaces and his widows, and all the rest of it."

Monsieur Bouchard, at this, burst into a string of bad words that were

very reprehensible, but perfectly natural to a man in his imminent circumstances.

However Pierre might choose to devil his master in private, in public he was unflinchingly loyal to him. In the first place, Léontine and de Meneval, each determined to force an explanation from Monsieur Bouchard, haunted the Rue Bassano, and when they did not come they wrote. It was easy enough to dispose of the frantic notes and letters, but when the two came—always separately—and Léontine wept and raved that she would and must see Papa Bouchard, and de Meneval swore and stormed to the same effect, Pierre was immovable. Monsieur was one day at Passy, another he was at Versailles, always on important business, and Pierre never had the least idea when he would be home. Thus, by unceasing vigilance and an unabashed front, Pierre managed to stave off an interview between his master and the de Menevals for the whole of a critical week.

Papa Bouchard, however, felt the necessity of doing something to prevent an open outbreak with either Léontine or her husband. So on two occasions he sent them each a cheque—not enough to pay their bills, but in the nature of throwing a tub to a whale.

Mademoiselle Bouchard was easier to manage. Pierre went to the Rue Clarisse daily, with a very acceptable tale about Monsieur Bouchard being so busy making the will of a rich old gentleman at Passy that he had no time for anything else; likewise, that he was finding the noise and commotion of the Rue Bassano so objectionable that he bitterly regretted having left the Rue Clarisse. This little romance took so well that Pierre improved on it by saying that Monsieur Bouchard was trying to sublet the apartment, so he could return to peace and quiet in the Rue Clarisse. Mademoiselle Bouchard was touched, charmed, delighted to hear this.

Not so Élise. She was not of a

trusting or confiding nature. When Pierre turned up, late in the day, yawning, and still only half-awake, she did not believe in the least his account of being kept awake by the noise of the carts and carriages in the Rue Bassano. She boldly taxed him with leading a riotous life, which Pierre strenuously denied, and going to Mademoiselle Bouchard, actually wept over Élise's want of confidence in him after thirty years of married life. Mademoiselle sharply rebuked Élise, and ordered her henceforth to believe everything Pierre told her. Élise made no reply to this beyond her usual sniff, but privately resolved the first day she had time to slip around to the Rue Bassano and interview the *concièrge*. She knew the ways of *concièrges* as well as the ways of men.

For four days Monsieur Bouchard gave himself, body and bones, to the business of a private detective in trying to locate Madame Vernet. Vain effort! He of course expected to have to pay handsomely for the return of the paste necklace, but he valued his peace of mind more than money, and was ready enough to come down with some cash provided he could get hold of the necklace.

On the fifth day he was delighted, but scarcely surprised, to receive a letter from Madame Vernet saying that, as there seemed to be some complications concerning the necklace he had so generously and sweetly given her, and as she was a person of much delicacy of feeling, she was seriously thinking of returning it. He could address her at the Pigeon House at Melun.

Monsieur Bouchard replied by writing and flatly offering her five hundred francs, six times the original value of the necklace. He himself took his letter out to the Pigeon House, and spent the entire evening there, on the chance that Madame Vernet might turn up. She did not, however. Next day he received a letter from her, all reproaches and hysterics; how could he offer her money!—her, the most disinterested,

the most retiring of her sex! Money was nothing to her, least of all a trifling sum of five hundred francs. Monsieur Bouchard promptly replied, increasing his offer to a thousand francs. Another deeply injured note from Madame Vernet. At last, after five days of continual negotiation, Monsieur Bouchard haunting the Pigeon House every evening, terms were arranged—two thousand francs in exchange for the necklace.

It was infamous, but as Pierre reminded Monsieur Bouchard, one must always pay for one's indiscretions. It would seem as if Madame Vernet had the direct inspiration of Satan himself in dealing with the too amiable and too susceptible Monsieur Bouchard. Not only had she given her address all along as the Pigeon House, but she appointed that abode of gaiety and champagne as the rendezvous where she was to meet Monsieur Bouchard and hand over the necklace in return for two thousand francs in notes of the Bank of France—Madame Vernet specified that there should be no cheque in the affair; she was so diffident, it always embarrassed her to go to a bank, and notes could be passed anywhere.

But Monsieur Bouchard was not wholly without discretion. He concluded he would rather not be seen in the act of handing over the money to Madame Vernet. Pierre—the foxy Pierre—should give her the money and should receive the necklace. So, on the evening specified, the two took the train for Melun, and went rattling out of Paris without dreaming of what was brewing behind them and likewise stewing ahead of them.

It was simply this: Élise had that evening found her opportunity to go round to the Rue Bassano, and in five minutes she had discovered everything Monsieur Bouchard and Pierre had been doing since they left the Rue Clarisse. The *concièrge* knew all about the chase after Madame Vernet, the continual trotting out to Melun—nay, she knew that both Pierre and his master had an appointment with Madame Vernet

at the Pigeon House that very evening. Élise returned, boiling with rage, to the Rue Clarisse, and with face and eyes blazing recounted to the trembling and agitated Mademoiselle Bouchard the horrid story of the frightful goings on in the Rue Bassano. And she had for audience not only poor Mademoiselle Bouchard, but Léontine de Meneval, who happened to be paying her weekly visit to the Rue Clarisse. Léontine scarcely heard Élise's fierce denunciations of the two reprobates in the Rue Bassano; all she really took in was the correspondence and the running to and fro about the necklace. She flew from the apartment, leaving Mademoiselle Bouchard in a state of collapse on the sofa, while Élise retailed every circumstance of horror she had found out about the renegades. Calling the first cab, Léontine drove rapidly home, rushed to her strong-box, and got the supposed paste necklace out. She had said to Monsieur Bouchard that anybody could tell at a glance that it was an imitation, yet it so glowed and sparkled in its white radiance that for the first time she began to suspect it was real. If so, it only deepened the mystery, and she felt she must solve it then and there. Again ordering a cab, she sprang into it and ordered the cabman to drive her to one of the great jewelry shops in the Avenue de l'Opéra. On reaching it she ordered the carriage to wait, and going into the shop, asked to see the proprietor. He advanced, politely, and Léontine, taking the necklace from about her neck, where she wore it under her high bodice, said, with such calmness as she could muster:

"Will you kindly give me some idea of the value of this?"

The jeweler took it up, examined it for a moment, and said:

"About twenty thousand francs, I should say, Madame. The stones are remarkably well matched, better than in many costlier necklaces."

"Do you mean to say the stones are—are——"

"Well matched, Madame. In fact,

some of them came from this establishment. It was made by M. Leduc, a friend of mine, and I assisted him."

"Thank you," replied Léontine, forcing herself to be calm, reclasping the necklace round her throat and covering it up. She went out, got into the cab again, and hesitated before giving her order. She was in truth quite dazed and mystified. The man had touched his hat three times, when she said, with an air of quiet determination:

"To the St. Lazare station."

Yes, she would that very moment go and confess all to Victor. Her resolution seemed an inspiration. There was some mystery about the necklace, and it was only fair that Victor should know it. There should be no more concealments between them. She reached the station just in time to miss the eight o'clock train. It was still daylight, and she waited for the next—a very slow one. Half-way to Melun the engine broke down. It was nearly eleven o'clock before she found herself in front of the huge old barrack building in which de Meneval had his quarters.

The orderly who took the place of *conciërge* at once recognized her, and politely escorted her to Captain de Meneval's door.

"I do not think Monsieur le Capitaine is in at present," he said; "but if Madame will wait, he will no doubt be here shortly." And he knocked loudly at the door.

It was opened by a soldier—de Meneval's servant—whom Léontine had never seen before. The man's unfamiliar face, and the unlooked-for sight that met her eyes as soon as she stepped over the threshold, made her turn as if to go out. In the middle of the room was spread a table, with preparations for an elaborate supper; and Léontine's quick eye discovered that ladies were expected, for to three huge bouquets were appended cards with names written on them. "For the Sprightly Aglaia," "For the Blue-eyed Olga," "For Louise of the Fairy Foot."

Léontine, slightly embarrassed, said to the soldier:

"I see I have made a mistake. I am Madame de Meneval, and I supposed these to be Captain de Meneval's quarters, but evidently they are not!"

"They are, Madame," replied the man, very civilly.

"But I say they are *not*!" replied Léontine, somewhat tartly. "Captain de Meneval *never* entertains ladies at supper. He leads a most retired life at Melun, while here are preparations made for a gay party."

"Pardon, Madame; but Monsieur le Capitaine is giving the party to some young ladies from the Pigeon House."

Léontine's first impulse was to box the soldier's ears, but in sweeping another glance round the room she recognized her own picture over the mantel, together with a battered photograph of de Meneval's chum, Major Fallière, and other things to convince her that Captain de Meneval was really the host of the impending supper party. She retained self-possession enough to say to the man:

"If you have finished you may go." And he discreetly vanished.

Léontine, throwing her parasol on the sofa, began to march up and down the room in wrath and excitement.

"*These* are his quiet evenings! *He* doesn't know anything about the Pigeon House since he was married! I shouldn't have minded it if he had told me all about it, but to pretend to such economies, and at the same time be secretly indulging in these extravagances—oh, it is too much!"

Léontine had completely forgotten Putzki and Louise and the object of her sudden descent on her husband. While she was walking up and down, becoming every moment more angry and wrought up, the door opened, and in walked Major Fallière. Léontine recognized him at once from his picture—a soldierly looking man, slightly bald, immaculately well dressed, and bearing in his air the reason for his sobriquet, the Pink of Military Propriety. But his eye was

not unkind; on the contrary, he was distinctly in the class of men designated by women as dear old things; and as such Léontine felt an instant confidence in him.

The correct Major was not so correct, however, that he hesitated to march up to Léontine, and chucking her playfully under the chin, remarked:

"The Pigeons are out early to-night. Where are the rest of the Pouters?"

Léontine's face was a study. A flash of rage from her bright eyes was succeeded by a look of puzzled helplessness, and then a radiant smile of fun. This was really too good. He—old P. M. P.—had mistaken her, Léontine de Meneval, for one of the young ladies from the Pigeon House! Angry as she was, she could not forbear laughing, and she replied, with her sauciest air:

"Oh, they'll be here presently. I came early because I had a premonition that old P. M. P. would be here early, too. Always on time—one of the cardinal virtues of a soldier." And then Satan tempted her to tiptoe and actually chuck old P. M. P. under the chin!

The effect frightened her for a moment or two, because Major Fallière, perfectly astounded and highly offended, drew himself up stiffly and glared at her like an ogre. But she was so very pretty, her impertinence was accompanied with such a charming air of simplicity, that no man not an absolute ogre could withstand it. So, in spite of himself, old P. M. P.'s backbone relaxed, his eyes softened and he tugged at his mustache to disguise the smile that *would* persist in coming.

Léontine having once admitted Satan into her heart, he speedily took complete possession of the premises, and the next thing he inspired her to do was to examine the prim Major carefully from the top of his thinly thatched head down to the tips of his well-fitting shoes, and say to him:

"I have often heard of you, and I am so glad to meet you. You

know you are quite a handsome man, Major."

The Major grinned.

"For your age, that is."

The Major scowled.

"And I like you well enough to wish to make friends with you. But first I must tell you my name. It is Satanita."

"Satanita! Rather suggestive, eh?"

"I should say so. Little Satan; and I match my name."

"You are the sweetest, most innocent and captivating little devil I ever saw."

"Thank you. You should see me dance and hear me sing. The Pouters, as you call them, are not a patch on me."

"I can well believe it."

"Now," continued Léontine, seating herself with a confidential air beside Major Fallière, "what do you think of our host, Victor de Meneval?"

"One of the best fellows in the world."

"Devoted to his wife, eh?"

"Yes. I have never seen her, but I hear she is a charming creature, and Victor is truly attached to her."

"This looks like it, doesn't it?" cried Léontine, pointing to the supper table.

"I don't see that it doesn't look like it. I happen to know that de Meneval has had a good deal to trouble him lately. He got some money from an unexpected source some days ago, and I advised him to give a little supper—it's dull out here, you know—"

"*You* advised him to give a little supper! You—the Pink of Military Propriety!"

"Yes, why not?"

Léontine, having announced herself as Satanita, was at a loss to answer this question. But something in the Major's kind eyes, his way of standing up for Victor, his candid praise of herself, gave her a sudden impulse to tell him the whole story of what was weighing on her and perplexing her and had driven her out to Melun at that hour of the night. She knew all about him, what a generous, sympa-

thetic fellow he was, in spite of his primness and propriety—in short, that he was a dear old thing. So, with eyes flashing with mischief, and with smiles dimpling her fair face, Léontine said, demurely:

"I have another name besides Satanita. Can't you guess it?"

"No. I am not a clairvoyant."

"I am—" Léontine rose, with her whole face sparkling with impish delight—"I am Léontine, Madame de Meneval, wife of your friend, Victor de Meneval. Yonder is my picture. Here am I."

Poor P. M. P! He stared at her for a full minute, glared wildly about him, and then, jumping up, made a dash for the door, from which Léontine, laughing till the tears ran down her cheeks, dragged him back.

"What are you running away for?" she asked, forcing him to a seat beside her.

"Because—because—" the Major tore his hair, "oh, de Meneval will certainly shoot me when he hears that I chucked you under the chin!"

"But he won't hear it, unless you tell him. And *I* chucked you under the chin, remember."

Major Fallière, burying his head in his hands, groaned aloud, and then all at once the absurdity of the thing struck him, and he burst into a howl of laughter.

Léontine joined him. They laughed and laughed, and when they would get a little quiet Léontine would motion as if to chuck him under the chin again, and Fallière would go off into renewed spasms.

Presently, however, Léontine grew grave. The instant success of her impromptu personation had given her an idea. She wanted revenge—a sharp revenge—on de Meneval, and she saw a way to get it.

"Listen, and be quiet," she said to Fallière. "Victor deserves to be punished. I will tell you why. He has always represented to me that he led the quietest kind of a life here—nothing but attention to his military duties, and his evenings spent in the seclusion of his own room, with noth-

ing but ballistics and my picture for company."

Fallière could not refrain from a soft whistle.

"And he professed to be so glad that you were ordered to Melun, because you were so much more sedate than the other officers. He complained that they spend too much time at the Pigeon House, while he had entirely given up frequenting that fascinating place."

Fallière whistled a little louder.

"I had the greatest difficulty in persuading him to take me to supper there the other night. Now, what do I find? That he has been throwing sand into my eyes all the time. Look!" Léontine waved her arms dramatically toward the table. "Oughtn't he to be punished?"

"Certainly he ought," replied Fallière, with the ready acquiescence of a bachelor who thinks that married men should be made to toe the line.

"Very well. You will help me?"

"You may count on me."

Léontine rose and looked around her. On the sideboard sat a couple of bottles of mineral water, and on the floor near by a wine cooler full of bottles of champagne. She cleverly transferred the labels from two of the champagne bottles to the apollinaris bottles and then put them in the wine cooler.

"I think I can drink at least a quart of apollinaris," she said.

"And I'll see that you get apollinaris every time," replied that crafty villain of a Fallière, laughing.

"And I'm Satanita, and I shall act Satanita until I have made Victor sorry enough he ever played me any tricks."

"Oh, no, you won't! At the first sign of distress on his part you will throw the whole business to the winds, fall on his neck and implore his forgiveness. I know women well."

"Of course you do—having never been married. But wait and see if I don't give him a bad quarter of an hour. And I reckon on your assistance."

"I will stand by you to the last."

They were interrupted at this point by a great sound of scuffling outside the door, mingled with shrieks of girlish laughter. The door flew open, revealing three remarkably pretty girls—Aglaia, Olga and Louise—dragging in an elderly gentleman by main force and his coat tails. The elderly gentleman was resisting mildly but with no great vigor, and it was plain he was not particularly averse to the roguish company in which he found himself. And the elderly gentleman was—Papa Bouchard!

One of these merry imps from the Pigeon House had possessed herself of his hat, which she had stuck on her curly head; another one had laid violent hands on his umbrella, while the third and sauciest of the lot, Aglaia, had robbed him of his spectacles, which she wore on her tiptilted nose. Papa Bouchard, puffing, protesting, frightened, but laughing in spite of himself, was saying:

"Young ladies, young ladies, I really cannot remain, as you insist, to supper. I do not even know the name of the host on this occasion. I am quite unused to these orgies. I am out here this evening with my servant merely for the purpose of completing a business transaction."

A chorus of "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" saluted this speech, and Mademoiselle Aglaia, Papa Bouchard's chief tormenter, asked, solemnly:

"Is your business engagement with a lady or a gentleman?"

And when Papa Bouchard, in the innocence of his soul, replied, "It is with a lady," each one of the Pouters, as the young ladies of the Pigeon House were called, pretended to fall over in a dead faint.

Papa Bouchard, much alarmed, ran from one to the other, trying to revive them; but while he was rubbing the brow and slapping the hands of each in turn, Louise suddenly came to life, and running and locking the door, put the key into her pocket, so that Papa Bouchard had no means of escape except out of the third-story window or up the chimney.

And at that moment his eye fell on Léontine.

Pity Papa Bouchard! He really had no intention of attending so gay a party. He had spent the whole evening anxiously watching for Madame Vernet. She had not arrived, or at least had not seen fit to reveal herself, and while he was hovering about the entrance to the terrace garden looking for her, these three merry girls had come along, had swooped down on him without the least warning, and had carried him off bodily to de Meneval's supper. Papa Bouchard had not the slightest idea of where he was when he was plumped down in Captain de Meneval's room. But one look round him—the sight of Léontine—revealed his whole dreadful predicament to him. It was too much for poor Papa Bouchard!

His persecutors having permitted him to sit on a chair, he endeavored to recover himself, and fanning with his handkerchief in great agitation, he debated with himself what to do. Léontine, meanwhile, was laughing at him without a sign of recognition.

Papa Bouchard, presently finding his voice, said sternly to Léontine:

"May I ask what you are doing here in this company?"

To which Léontine, with pert gaiety, replied:

"And may I ask what *you* are doing here in this company?"

"I," said Papa Bouchard, with dignity, "am here by accident, and by the violence of these young women."

"Oh, what a fib!" cried Olga. "The old hunks begged us to let him come. We tried to shake him off, but we couldn't. Isn't that so, Aglaia and Louise?"

And Aglaia and Louise said it was so. Papa Bouchard, astounded at such duplicity, glared at them, but the only satisfaction he got was a flip on the nose from Aglaia and a remark to the effect that he and the truth didn't live at the same address. Papa Bouchard indignantly turned his back on these traducers and again opened on Léontine.

"I am amazed—amazed at your

temerity. What shall I say to Captain de Meneval when I see him, as I shall to-morrow morning?"

"Anything you like," was Léontine's laughing answer.

"Léontine de Meneval," cried Papa Bouchard, much enraged, "do you know *me*, your guardian and trustee?"

"No, I don't," responded Léontine, nonchalantly. "I never saw you before."

At this, shouts of laughter came from the three young ladies, and they all urged Papa Bouchard to stop his wild career of prevarication and learn to tell the truth.

Papa Bouchard, quite beside himself, turned to Major Fallière.

"Sir," he said, solemnly, "you wear the uniform of an officer, and I presume you are a gentleman. Believe me, this lady—" indicating Léontine—"is the wife of a brother officer of yours, Captain de Meneval. The truest kindness you can do him or her is to persuade her to leave this scene of dissipation and return to Paris with me."

"O-o-o-oh!" shrieked the three impish girls in chorus. "What an outrageous proposition! And she says she never saw the man before!"

Papa Bouchard, still appealing to Major Fallière, continued, earnestly:

"Perhaps this misguided girl has not told you that she is Madame Victor de Meneval."

"She told me," quietly replied Major Fallière, "that she was simply Satanita, a singer and dancer."

Papa Bouchard dropped limply on the sofa and groaned in anguish of heart. But now was heard a jaunty step on the stair, which all recognized as de Meneval's. The mischievous Aglaia ran forward and unlocked the door, and in stepped de Meneval, smiling and debonair.

Now, this little festivity had been his sole recreation during the ten miserable days since he had got into the complication of the necklace; and the supper, which was for only five, was at the suggestion of the Pink of Military Propriety. So it was without

any compunctions that de Meneval walked into his quarters, expecting to find a small but jolly party. But he instantly recognized the two uninvited members, and stopping short on the carpet, his ruddy complexion turned a sickly green.

Papa Bouchard felt a sensation of triumph at Captain de Meneval's entrance. *He*, at least, would not dare to deride and defy him, as these wretched young women had done. But before Monsieur Bouchard could open his mouth, Aglaia burst forth, pointing to the old gentleman:

"Of all the impudent men I ever saw, this one excels! What do you think? As soon as he found we were coming here to supper, he hung on to us—declared there was nothing he liked so well as a gay little party, that he could drink more champagne in a given time than any man in Paris, and actually forced himself in here, although we tried to push him out. Didn't he, Olga and Louise?"

And Olga and Louise confirmed every word that Aglaia uttered.

Papa Bouchard, thoroughly exasperated, struck an attitude like that of Socrates in his favorite picture, "Socrates and His Pupils," and addressed Captain de Meneval.

"Monsieur le Capitaine," he said, "you of course do not and cannot believe a word that these young ladies say concerning my presence here to-night."

Victor, very much alarmed, and dreading to catch Léontine's eye, yet retained enough of his wits to see that he had Papa Bouchard at a disadvantage, and that the best thing to do was to assume the worst and decline to listen to any explanation.

"Monsieur Bouchard," he said, coldly, "you are asking a little too much of me when you wish me to believe your testimony against that of three ladies. I don't know how you came, but I am very glad to see you now that you are here, and hope you will remain to supper."

"But I came on business!" cried poor Papa Bouchard. "I had an ap-

pointment to finish up a transaction with a lady——"

And Aglaia and Louise and Olga again uttered a chorus of shrieks, and pretended to faint.

But de Meneval had troubles of his own to attend to then. He walked over to where Léontine sat, and assuming an air of forced jollity, such as a man puts on when he anticipates a wiggling from the wife of his bosom, said:

"Delighted you happened to arrive, my love—and what do you think of the Pouters?"

"I think they are very jolly girls," promptly replied Léontine; "but as I am another uninvited guest, I thought it best to tell Major Fallière and the others that I, too, am a singer and dancer—Satanita I called myself on the spur of the moment."

De Meneval turned from green to blue. "And you did not immediately inform them that you are my wife?" he hissed, in a savage whisper.

"No," coolly replied Léontine, "and when Papa Bouchard recognized me, I declared I had never seen him before. I am little Satanita—good name, isn't it?—for this evening."

De Meneval, enraged and disconcerted beyond words, felt helpless. Suppose he were to proclaim the truth? Léontine, as if answering the thought in his mind, whispered, with cruel glee:

"And if you say I am your wife I shall simply deny it. Satanita I am and Satanita I shall be, and I shall live up to the part—of that you may be sure."

De Meneval was in doubt whether to laugh or to shoot himself. And then there was a move toward the table. The girls were dragging Papa Bouchard forward, who, still very angry, was yet not insensible to their pretty and mischievous wiles. Léontine, running up to Major Fallière, demanded that he sit next her at table, while de Meneval found himself sitting opposite Léontine, and with indescribable feelings saw her drink champagne, as he supposed,

by the tumblerful. Fallière had cleverly got hold of the two bottles of apollinaris, and filled Léontine's glass with the greatest assiduity.

There was much noise and excitement, and as the supper progressed de Meneval grew almost frantic over the spectacle his dear little Léontine was making of herself. For she not only managed to drink innumerable glasses of apollinaris, but she sang; she even danced. She paraded up and down the room, singing, in her sweet, saucy voice, verses made up at the moment.

When her invention gave out, she rubbed the top of de Meneval's head with one of the champagne bottles, and added, laughing:

"Houp-la!"

That "Houp-la" almost drove de Meneval to distraction, but a roar of applause, in which all joined except her husband and Papa Bouchard, encouraged Léontine to continue. After a few moments' reflection she began singing again:

"This is the way in Champagne Land!
Oh, Champagne Land is dear to me,
But Champagne Land is queer to me.

There lobsters grow on trees,

There is a mine of cheese;

The oysters walk,

The cocktails talk,

And the *pâté de foie gras* builds his nest
In the hedge where the anchovy paste
grows best."

And she concluded with another "Houp-la!"

At this Papa Bouchard, who had been as much horrified as de Meneval, leaned over and whispered in agony to him:

"She has certainly lost her mind and appears quite crazy!"

This was too much for poor de Meneval. He had spent an hour of torture while Léontine, vastly to her own amusement, to Major Fallière's, and to that of the Pouters, had exhibited all the saucy graces of a Sata-nita, but he could stand no more. Therefore, rising from the table, he cried, with tears in his eyes:

"My friends, I beg of you to leave me. This lady who calls herself Sata-

nita is my wife. I have never seen her act in this manner before—I am sure she never so acted before. It is my duty as well as my privilege to shield her, and I wish to say that if any person, man or woman, ever mentions what her unfortunate conduct to-night has been, a life will be forfeited, for I swear to shoot any man who dares to breathe one word against her, and any woman who does it may reckon on my vengeance." And with big tears rolling down his cheeks, he held out his arms to his wife.

This was too much for Léontine. Just as Major Fallière had predicted, at the first sign of repentance on de Meneval's part she forgot all her resolutions to punish him, and falling into his arms, she exclaimed, in her natural voice:

"You dear, chivalrous old thing, I haven't touched champagne—it is nothing but apollinaris water, and I am your own true, devoted Léontine!"

De Meneval was so overcome that he could do nothing but pat her head and cry:

"Oh, what have you not made me suffer to-night!"

"At least," replied Léontine, laughing and looking toward Major Fallière, "you have not spent your usual dull evening at Melun," and de Meneval had the grace to blush, while old P. M. P. laughed back at the roguish Léontine.

Papa Bouchard, too, had suffered agonies at Léontine's behavior—agonies, however, which the attentions he experienced at the hands of the young ladies partly ameliorated, for they had not stopped pinching and tickling him for a single moment.

"Really," he said, "I have been very much agitated and distressed—I never saw such doings in the Rue Clarisse. I was very seriously concerned at my ward's behavior—very seriously concerned. But now," continued Papa Bouchard, "everything seems to be straightened out to everybody's satisfaction, and finding ourselves accidentally together, why not finish up our evening with a jollity which—er—did not—er—exist, so far

as I am concerned, in the beginning? So I say—houp-la!"

Alas! at that very moment the door opened softly behind him and in walked Madame Vernet! She was prettier, more demure and gentle than ever before. Her black costume, though highly coquettish, had a nun-like propriety about it. She advanced with downcast eyes, and said, timidly:

"I knocked and thought I heard someone say, 'Come in.' I do not know on whose hospitality I am trespassing, but I saw Monsieur Bouchard enter half an hour ago, and as I must see him on a matter of business, I venture to ask for a word with him here."

Monsieur Bouchard, at the sight of her, seemed about to collapse. Not so Captain de Meneval. He rose at once and said, with an ironical bow:

"Madame Vernet, you are trespassing on the hospitality of Captain de Meneval, the gentleman you adopted as a brother about ten days ago and handed over as a dangerous lunatic to Dr. Delcasse—who had a strait-jacket, a cold douche and a padded cell ready for him."

At this Madame Vernet assumed an attitude more shrinking, more timid than before, and falling on Monsieur Bouchard's shoulder, cried:

"Dear Paul, protect me from this dreadful person!"

Monsieur Bouchard was not at that moment able to protect anybody. He looked the picture of abject despair as he clutched the arms of his chair. He could only say, feebly:

"Go away! go away!"

"Is that the way you speak to your own Adèle!" cried Madame Vernet, burying her head on Monsieur Bouchard's reluctant bosom and bursting into tears. "Oh, what a change within one short week! Last week it was nothing but 'Dearest Adèle, when will you name the day?' And now it is 'Go away! go away!'" Madame Vernet's voice was lost in sobs, but she continued to rub her left ear vigorously into Monsieur Bouchard's shirt front.

"It is false!" wailed Monsieur Bouchard, trying to escape from Madame Vernet's left ear.

"Do you pretend to deny," sobbed that timid and trustful creature, "that only a week ago you gave me this?" She took from her pocket the paste necklace, and at the sight of it a shock like a galvanic battery ran down the backbones of de Meneval and Léontine. "And that when I found it to be paste you offered me two thousand francs, in humble apology for the attempt to deceive me?"

"It is false!" again cried Monsieur Bouchard, almost in tears.

"And that we were to meet here to-night in order to make exchange? Oh, dearest Paul, we have had lovers' quarrels before, but nothing like this!"

Monsieur Bouchard was too much overcome by Madame Vernet's affectionate attentions to do more than groan and try to push her away. But de Meneval, walking coolly up to her, quietly and very unexpectedly took the necklace out of her hand, saying:

"This is the property of my wife, and as such I take possession of it, and call on Monsieur Bouchard to make an explanation."

At this Madame Vernet uttered a despairing shriek, and throwing both arms round Monsieur Bouchard's neck, screamed:

"You must avenge this insult, Paul! And you must at least give me the two thousand francs!"

But Monsieur Bouchard was so perfectly delighted with the notion that de Meneval had the necklace and Pierre the two thousand francs, that his countenance changed as if by magic. He struggled to his feet, and after vainly trying to disengage himself from Madame Vernet's encircling arms, much to the amusement of the three young ladies and Major Fallière, cried:

"I am perfectly overjoyed to make an explanation—an explanation that will cause you, Léontine, and you, de Meneval, to forget all the unpleasant events of this evening. This necklace is paste—and the one Léon-

tine has is real. You may remember, de Meneval, you came to my apartment a week ago last Monday evening, bringing Léontine's real diamond necklace with you. You told me that when you bought it for her you also bought an imitation one for seventy-five francs, which you kept a secret from her."

De Meneval, during this speech, had lost his dashing and determined attitude.

"I believe I did something of the kind," he said, meekly.

"And that you had, still unknown to Léontine, put the paste one in place of the real one; and you threatened, if I did not advance money to pay a large bill you owed at the Pigeon House for things like this—" Monsieur Bouchard indicated the supper table and the guests with one wave of his arm—"you would take the necklace to the pawnbroker."

De Meneval turned to Léontine, and knowing what was coming, said, with a sickly smile:

"Dearest, will you forgive me?"

"Indeed I will!" replied Léontine, who knew more of what was coming than did de Meneval.

"Scarcely were you gone," continued Monsieur Bouchard, assuming his oracular manner, which sat rather awkwardly on him, as Madame Vernet persisted in nestling on his shoulder, "when in comes Léontine with the paste necklace, and for the same purpose—money or the pawnbroker. It at once occurred to me that she could not be trusted with any necklace on which she thought money could be raised—her debts were to tailors and dressmakers—so I gave her back her own necklace—she has it now—and told her it was paste, and she said it looked it. Then, just as I had got rid of her, in comes *this* lady—" Papa Bouchard made a desperate effort to shake off Madame Vernet, but that diffident person only held on to him the more affectionately—"picked up the necklace, clasped it round her neck and walked off with it, and I have spent the most miserable week of my life

trying to get it back. I had arranged to give her the two thousand francs that Pierre, my man, has in his pocket at this moment, when, owing to this lady's indelicate persistence in following me here, and in rashly exposing the necklace, she lost it, and I keep my two thousand francs. If I could find that rascal Pierre I could prove all I say."

And as if in answer to his name, the door was burst open, and in rushed Pierre, pale and breathless.

"Monsieur," he cried to Papa Bouchard, "all is discovered, and we are in the greatest danger. My wife Élise found out everything from the *concièrge* in the Rue Bassano this evening. She went back to Mademoiselle Bouchard, and, if you please, both of them took the train for Melun to capture us—and just as I was coming to warn you I ran into them at the foot of the stairs. They had asked for Captain de Meneval's quarters, in order to get him to help them search for us. They are on the stairs now!"

Léontine and de Meneval, meaning to let Monsieur Bouchard bear the brunt of Mademoiselle Bouchard's wrath alone, immediately scuttled into seats against the wall, which they occupied with great dignity. Major Fallière, who had heard of Mademoiselle Bouchard, got as far away from the girls as he could, and they—Aglaia, Olga and Louise—with much discretion ranged themselves primly on a sofa at the farthest end of the room. But this left Papa Bouchard standing in the middle, with Madame Vernet embracing him tenderly. He, too, would have liked to flee, but he was literally frozen with terror, and unable to move or speak. And then the door came open, and in walked, or rather marched, Mademoiselle Céleste Bouchard and Élise.

Never in all his fifty-four years of life had Monsieur Bouchard seen his sister in such a state as she was at that moment. Her eyes sparkled, and her small figure was erect and commanding. Her emotions had made both her and Élise alto-

gether forget the primness and propriety of their costumes, for which mistress and maid had been noted. Mademoiselle Bouchard's correct, elderly bonnet seemed to have caught the same inflection of demoralization as Monsieur Bouchard, Pierre and Pierrot, for it sat at a most improper and dissipated angle. Her mantle was awry, and she had on one white glove and one black one, and a fringe of white petticoat showed the agitation in which she had dressed.

Élise was in somewhat the same condition, and she clutched a flower pot and a gold-headed stick which had belonged to Bouchard *père*, under the impression they were a traveling bag and an umbrella.

The sight that met their eyes was Monsieur Bouchard apparently submitting with willingness to Madame Vernet's endearments, while the lady herself sobbed out:

"Oh, Paul, dearest, protect your own Adèle from that dreadful old woman!"

Now, this was too much for any woman to stand. Mademoiselle Bouchard, panting and trembling with wrath and horror, sank into a chair.

"Élise," she gasped, putting her hand before her eyes, "put up your umbrella between me and that disgraceful sight. I cannot look upon it."

Élise, equally agitated, made futile attempts to convert the stick into an umbrella, and then cried out:

"Oh, this is only a stick! Perhaps I put the umbrella in the traveling bag." But failing to find an umbrella in the flower pot, she collapsed into a chair next her mistress, crying out: "When you, Mademoiselle, have finished with Monsieur Bouchard I'll dispose of Pierre. Oh, the rascal!"

Pierre, like his master, was dumb before the accuser. Not so Madame Vernet. She continued to appeal to Monsieur Bouchard:

"Oh, darling Paul, I am so frightened! Why don't you send her away?"

As for poor Monsieur Bouchard, he was simply a pitiable sight, and the

de Menevals, the Major and the three girls were heartless enough to go into convulsions of silent mirth at his predicament. They, too, had nothing to say in Mademoiselle Bouchard's indignant presence. But that lady was determined to be answered.

"Paul," she said, in the tone of an inquisitor, "stop those shocking demonstrations toward that person and explain your conduct to me."

"My dear Céleste," replied Papa Bouchard, in a faint voice and almost weeping, "if you could induce this lady to stop *her* demonstrations I should be the happiest man on earth. And there's no explanation to give. I'm the helpless victim of a designing woman."

At which Madame Vernet screamed and said, trying to kiss him:

"But I will forgive you, my own Paul. I know you don't mean what you say."

Apparently Madame Vernet was mistress of the situation, but Major Fallière, the cool, quiet Fallière, came to the rescue. Going up quietly to Madame Vernet, he deliberately raised her face so he could look her squarely in the eye.

"Madame Vernet," he said, "you seem to have lost sight of that little incident of representing my friend, Captain de Meneval, as your brother and a dangerous lunatic, and the trick you played on Dr. Delcasse. Now, I happen to know that Dr. Delcasse is determined to punish you, if he can find you, and unless you immediately leave these quarters and leave Melun I shall inform Dr. Delcasse of your whereabouts, and you will have a visit from the police."

Madame Vernet, seeing she had met her match, disengaged herself from Monsieur Bouchard, to that gentleman's great joy. Assuming an attitude and air of great innocence, she said:

"I don't really understand what you mean, or even who you are. But being naturally a very diffident and retiring person, I cannot stand the least unfavorable criticism, and I

shall certainly leave this censorious and unsympathetic company."

Major Fallière ceremoniously offered her his arm, escorted her to the door, and opened it. Madame Vernet paused on the threshold.

"I go," she said, "to seek refuge and protection with my aunt and uncle in Mézières."

And the Major shut the door after her.

Mademoiselle Bouchard then rose majestically and advanced to Monsieur Bouchard.

"And *you*, Paul," she said, "will seek refuge and protection in the house of your sister in the Rue Clarisse, where you spent thirty happy and peaceful years. You will thus resume the orderly and quiet life interrupted by your unfortunate excursion into the Rue Bassano. You will return to early hours and wholesome meals. You will have boiled mutton and rice, with a small glass of claret, for your dinner, and ten o'clock will be your hour for retiring. An occasional visit to a picture gallery or a museum will supply you with amusements far more intellectual than the orgies you have been indulging in at the Pigeon House."

Monsieur Bouchard, the image of despair, looked round him. Captain de Meneval and Léontine were in fits of laughter. The three girls, huddled together on the sofa, were tittering; the grim Major was smiling broadly. Even a worm will turn, and so did Monsieur Bouchard.

"I am sorry, my dear Céleste," he said, in a voice he vainly endeavored to make cool and debonair, "but what you suggest is impossible. I have taken my apartment for a year. And I find that boiled mutton and rice for dinner do not suit my constitution. I—I—I—shall re—remain in the Rue Bassano."

A round of applause from Major Follière, Léontine and Victor, in which the three young ladies joined, much to Monsieur Bouchard's annoyance, greeted this. Nevertheless, it stiffened his backbone.

"Do you mean to say that you do

not intend to return to the Rue Clarisse?" asked Mademoiselle Bouchard, in much agitation.

"Y—yes," replied Monsieur Bouchard, trying to assume a swash-buckler air. "You see, I don't think the air of the Rue Clarisse agrees with me very well. I often had twinges of rheumatism there. Now, since I have been in the Rue Bassano my joints feel about twenty-five years younger. In fact, I myself feel considerably younger—an increased vitality, so to speak. I am sorry to disoblige you, my dear Céleste, but for the sake of my health and other reasons I shall remain in my present quarters."

Mademoiselle Bouchard, defeated, was speechless. Not so Élise. Walking up to Pierre, she seized him and bawled:

"No excuses about your health shall keep *you* from the Rue Clarisse. I promise you that you shall have a very different time there from your life in the Rue Bassano, turning night into day, running out here to the Pigeon House all the time and making a show and a scandal of yourself."

"No, Élise," firmly replied Pierre, who had much more real courage than his master, "I promised Mademoiselle Bouchard that I never would desert Monsieur Bouchard. If he remains in the midst of the dangers of the Rue Bassano he needs my protecting services more than ever. Although but a servant, I have a sense of honor. I cannot break my word."

"Oh, you old hypocrite—" began Élise.

"Hypocrite you may call me," answered Pierre, folding his arms and turning up the whites of his eyes, "but liar and falsifier you cannot. Mademoiselle—" to Mademoiselle Bouchard—"I shall keep my word to you. As long as Monsieur Bouchard remains in the Rue Bassano I stay with him. He shall not face alone the dangers of that gay locale—those music halls, those theatres, those merry cafés, where all sorts of delicious, indigestible things are sold.

His faithful Pierre shall be with him."

Mademoiselle Bouchard realized she was beaten. So did Élise. They rose slowly. De Meneval ran into the next room, and bringing out a cage that held the redoubtable Pierrot, put it into Mademoiselle Bouchard's hand.

"There, dear Aunt Céleste," he cried, "is your consoler. I offered to buy him from the proprietor of the Pigeon House, but the man said he would give me the bird for nothing—in fact, he would pay to get rid of him. He was driving the customers of the Pigeon House away by his language."

"At least," said Mademoiselle Bouchard, solemnly, "if men are renegades, there is something of the same sex that is faithful and grateful. No doubt this poor bird is happy at escaping from the dissipated atmosphere of the Pigeon House to the sweet seclusion of the Rue Clarisse."

But, horror of horrors! The instant the wicked Pierrot found himself going in the direction of the door, on his way to the Rue Clarisse, he broke out into the most outrageous denunciations of the two ladies. Shrieks, demoniac laughter, yells, oaths and slang of the worst description poured from him; he screamed with rage, bit furiously at both Mademoiselle Bouchard and Élise, and forcing the cage door open, with almost human intelligence flew out and perched on Monsieur Bouchard's shoulder, from which he continued his volley of abuse, winding up with a shout of:

"Go to the devil, you old mummies!"

But the two mummies were already

fleeing. Of course, no such bird as Pierrot had become could be tolerated in the Rue Clarisse, and Élise cried, while she and Mademoiselle Bouchard ran down the stairs:

"The only safe thing to do, Mademoiselle, is to keep everything masculine out of our apartment. They are all alike—men and parrots—everything that is masculine is abominable and not to be trusted. They live to deceive us poor women, and are never so happy as when they are lying to us. So let them go—Monsieur, Pierre and Pierrot—the wretches, and trust to retributive justice to overtake them!"

But neither Monsieur Bouchard nor Pierre seemed to fear the blindfolded lady with the sword. They were at that moment capering with glee, and Papa Bouchard was shouting:

"I invite you all to the Pigeon House to supper once a week with me! It is the jolliest place I know! And the next jolliest place shall be in the Rue Bassano! Léontine, you shall have all your income to spend, and if you get into straits for a thousand francs or two, let Papa Bouchard know. Victor, when there's a little supper party on hand don't forget Papa Bouchard. Pierre, we are free—free!—young, free and gay as the larks! Pierre, do you hear, my boy?—we're free! We're not going back to live in the Rue Clarisse, but we shall lead a pleasant life, like the gay dogs we are, and sit up all hours and eat and drink of the best! We are free!"

"Yes—free!" echoed Pierre, capering in his delight, while Pierrot shrieked, as if inspired:

"Free! free! Gay dogs we are! Free!"



PLEASANT DREAMS

MAY—Have you ever dreamed that you were married?

GRACE—Have I! Why, I was divorced three times in my dreams last night.

DIGHTON IS ENGAGED!

By Gelett Burgess

DIGHTON is engaged! Think of it and tremble!
Two-and-twenty ladies who have known him must dissemble;
Two-and-twenty ladies in a panic must repeat:
“Dighton is a gentleman; will Dighton be discreet?”
All the merry maidens who have known him at his best
Wonder what the girl is like, and if he has confessed.
Dighton the philanderer, will he prove a slanderer?
A man gets confidential ere the honeymoon has fled.
Dighton was a rover then, Dighton lived in clover then;
Dighton is a gentleman, but Dighton is to wed!

Dighton is engaged! Think of it, Corinna!
Watch and see his fiancée smile on you at dinner!
Watch and hear his fiancée whisper, “*That’s* the one?”
Try and raise a blush for what you said was “only fun.”
Long have you been wedded; have you then forgot?
If you have I’ll venture that a certain man has not!
Dighton had a way with him; did you ever play with him?
Now that dream is over, and the episode is dead.
Dighton never harried you after Charlie married you;
Dighton is a gentleman, but Dighton is to wed!

Dighton is engaged! Think of it, Bettina!
Did you ever love him when the sport was somewhat keener?
Did you ever kiss him as you sat upon the stairs?
Did you ever tell him of your former love affairs?
Think of it uneasily and wonder if his wife
Soon will know the amatory secrets of your life!
Dighton was impressible, you were quite accessible;
The bachelor who marries late is apt to lose his head;
Dighton wouldn’t hurt you; does it disconcert you?
Dighton is a gentleman, but Dighton is to wed!

Dighton is engaged! Think of it, Miss Alice!
When he comes no longer will you bear the lady malice?
Now he comes to dinner, and he smokes cigars with Clint,
But he never makes a blunder and he never drops a hint;
He’s a universal uncle, with a welcome everywhere—
He adopts his sweetheart’s children, and he lets ’em pull his hair.
Dighton has a memory bright and sharp as emery,
He *could* tell them fairy stories that would make you rather red!
Dighton can be trusted, though; Dighton’s readjusted, though!
Dighton is a gentleman, but Dighton is to wed!

Dighton is engaged! Think of it, Myrtilla!
 Dighton has been known to be a dashing lady-killer!
 Dighton has been known to flirt with Kitty, Lou and Nell,
 These and many others, if the man would only tell!
 Every girl who loves a man tells him all she knows;
 When a man's a Benedick all discretion goes!
 Dighton's wife will chatter so! Does it really matter so?
 Everybody's bound to know what everybody's said!
 Dighton thinks his mystery contravenes all history!
 Dighton is a gentleman, but Dighton is to wed!



HEART TO HEART ADVICE

SHE—I would leave my happy home for you.
 HE—That's all very good, my precious; but don't burn the bridges behind you.



LITERALLY IMPOSSIBLE

BOBBY—Father, is it correct to say that a storm is brewing?
 COLONEL BLOOD—No, my son; it never rains anything but water



BEWARE OF VIDDERS

YOU may love a simple little maid,
 And in time may marry her;
 But to wed a widow, gay or staid
 Is a thing that can't occur.

For the widow is of sterner stuff,
 And you'll find it pretty true
 You can wed a maid all right enough,
 But a widow marries you!



NOT GUILTY

BRONSON—I understand you told someone I was a dog.
 HOBSON—It wasn't I. You are barking up the wrong tree, old fellow.

IN LOCO PARENTIS

By Elizabeth Duer

IF a man cannot get more out of the tie of brotherhood than a mere sense of kinship there is something wrong either with himself or the other fellow. At any rate, I found my brother Phil satisfied my warmest affections—that is, till quite lately—and gave me a motive for circumspect behavior which would have tended toward priggishness if I had not been just the man I am.

When we were boys, as long as my parents lived I felt irresponsible in regard to Philip, and he often wore on my nerves—in fact, I cuffed him like thunder—for he was three years younger than I, and had no business to set himself up as my equal. For example, if I chose to be a wild Indian, with the handle of the housemaid's feather duster thrust down my back and the plumes nodding fiercely over my scalp, it was pretty disgusting to have Phil go whining to the parlormaid for a similar war-bonnet, with the result that mine was removed from me with abuse; or if I chose to visit the cherry trees and *look* at the fruit till my waistband grew tight, it was hard lines that Phil should first follow my example and then have a bilious attack, which gave ocular proof that the seduction of fruit to man does not lie wholly in apples. Alas! other fruits in their turn are desired to make one wise.

When our parents died our guardian and relations discovered I was the only person who could manage Phil, and so, gradually, his education was left in my control, and—there is no use in blinking the truth—I grew dotingly fond of him.

I meant him to follow my lead—that is, to go to one of our great New England schools, then to Harvard, later to study law in New York—I am now thirty, and making from eight to ten thousand a year—but he developed a taste for brass buttons, and nothing would serve him but West Point. The truth is, Phil and I had prospects—a rich uncle, who had already turned seventy-five, and meant to leave his moneybags to us—so it did not seriously matter in what special line the boy received his discipline. So I got him his appointment through our cousin, Senator Bagge, and the young rascal passed rattling good examinations, and never got into more scrapes than he could pull himself out of, but he caught the cadet attitude toward girls. Everybody knows what that is—a dancing-master gallantry at the first interview, more than suggested love-making at the second, a kiss and a declaration at the third. However, he graduated without any serious entanglement just at the breaking out of the Spanish War. He got an appointment on General Sabre's staff, was ordered to Manila, and I saw him off with a heavy heart, but with no fears for his safety except those incident to bullets and a hot climate. A delay in San Francisco, however, gave time for idleness and some arch mischief, which makes me fancy that his Majesty of Horns and Hoofs is not a stranger to the Pacific slope. I had a letter:

DEAR MONTY:

I was married yesterday to the loveliest girl in the world. She has no relations and was studying nursing at the

San Francisco Hospital, where I was laid up for a week with a sprained ankle.

We are sailing to-morrow, and old Sabre—bad luck to his leather wallet of a heart!—says Ada cannot follow me, that Manila is no place for ladies, and any of his staff disregarding his wishes in this respect will find themselves speedily transferred, etc.

My poor girl is broken-hearted. Be a brother to her, as you have always been to me, dear Mont, and if I die let her look to you for protection.

Affectionately yours,

PHILIP MURRAY.

Her name is Ada. She was a hospital nurse, and is now Mrs. Philip Murray. A nice lot of information to help one form some idea of a newly acquired sister-in-law! If I had had Phil in New York I could have beaten him from the Battery to the Bronx with his own sword. The way young people bind burdens for the shoulders of their relatives is appalling; and then they expect the relatives to be touched by a few sentimental allusions to past kindnesses.

A hospital nurse! Somehow it excited my old-fashioned prejudices. Theoretically, I respected women who could work for their living, but in reality I despised them cordially and looked on them with suspicion.

It took me three months to forgive Phil, but I did at last, and I wrote to him regularly and sent him boxes of books and good things to eat, but I drew the line at Mrs. Phil. I said I was not to be appealed to except in case of extreme necessity. I even suggested—*via* Manila—that she would do well to return to the training school.

By the following Spring I had got quite accustomed to the idea of Phil's being away, and I seldom thought of the anxiety that lurked in San Francisco. In fact, I had enjoyed my Winter uncommonly, and had allowed myself a good deal of dissipation in the way of dinners and entertainments, because I found it the easiest way to obtain speech with Miss Honora Standard, a young lady of such superior mind that she would have attracted me if she had been as

plain as—well, most superior women, instead of the beauty everyone raved about. My interest in Miss Standard had much to do with my indifference to the worries provided by Phil, and I was ill prepared for the shock that awaited me one April morning when I got to my office. A telegram lay on my desk.

TO MONTGOMERY MURRAY:

Mrs. Philip Murray died here to-day after giving birth to a son.

W. J. BROWN, M. D.,

San Francisco Hospital.

The Summer resident of New York has undoubtedly often seen some great epic done in histrionic fireworks by Mr. Paine, and will recall the usual finale when the mountains and the waters are turned into molten streams and the galleys and the warships burst into a hell of explosion, and the beating hearts of the audience are quieted only when the familiar countenance of their President literally beams on them from a concerted piece. Just so, across the miserable excitement and chaos of my mind, stood out the helpful, noble features of my friend Dr. Dearborn.

I threw business to the winds—that is, to my partners—and calling a hansom I was rapidly driven to my friend's house in Forty-first street. He is a great authority on babies, and on being ushered into his waiting-room I found it packed with mothers and nurses, each of the latter hushing a bundle of white fluff, while the atmosphere was laden with a mixture of scent, warm flannel and sourness. I backed out, and finding the servant in the hall, I pressed a bill into her hand and begged her to procure me an immediate interview with the great man, on the ground of intimacy and pressure of time.

Alas! the autocrat's advice coincided with the warnings of my conscience.

"I don't see any other course, old fellow. You will have to assume charge until Phil gets home, and that can't be for months. With a good nurse it won't be such a nuisance as you think."

"But the absurdity of the situation!" I urged. "It is enough to ruin my reputation!"

"Nonsense!" said Dearborn. "Do your duty and let your reputation take care of itself."

For the first time in my life I distrusted Dearborn's single-mindedness. I believe he saw me, in his mind's eye, waiting with a nurse and a white bundle in that damned reception-room, and was gloating over all the shekels that would jingle out of my pockets into his.

"Then you advise me to telegraph the hospital authorities to send the child on?" I said, dejectedly.

"I advise you to go for it," he answered, sternly.

Life took on a dismal coloring.

"I look just the figure, don't I, to dandle a week-old child from California to New York! You'll have to guess again, Dearborn."

My fine scorn was absolutely thrown away.

"You had better start as soon as you can," he said. "There will be money matters to settle, and in regard to the child, get a good, healthy wet-nurse and bring it East."

"Oh!" I said, as I grasped the idea, "I never thought of that. But when I get it here, you would hardly advise its living in my rooms at the University Club, would you?"

He hated to be made fun of, and answered, pettishly:

"You will have to take a cottage for the Summer, near town, in some healthful locality."

I wondered whether he had a cottage up his sleeve.

"Do you know Hilltop, in New Jersey?" he continued. "Just the place for you. I think I could manage to look up a house for you there while you are away. The price? Oh, in the neighborhood of a thousand, but fully furnished, even to a horse and a cow."

He seemed rather intimate with this cottage. The baby might find the cow available, and I should value the horse as a means of getting away from the place, but they hardly fulfilled my idea of furniture.

"Good-bye," I said, dismally; "I place myself in your hands."

"Stay a moment, Murray," he called after me. "Take this book, 'Advice to Young Mothers;' it tells you nearly everything you ought to know, and if you look it over carefully you can really get the upper hand of your nurse: She may even suppose you a physician and be afraid to flout your opinion. Above all things, learn to be firm; women of that class are apt to take advantage of any uncertainty on the part of their employers."

The door closed behind me. There stood my hansom waiting, not for me alone, but for a pack of worries I had to bundle in with me, and which oppressed me like an asthma.

II

DR. BROWN received me at the San Francisco Hospital with that professional warmth which is so consoling. He rapidly ran over the events of Mrs. Murray's death. She had lived a few hours after the birth of the child, long enough to furnish my name and address and to have the child christened, for she was a Catholic and had summoned her priest.

"What is its name?" I asked.

"Yours, I believe, sir," the doctor responded. "Would you like to see the infant? By the way, you spoke of taking it East at once. I should advise a trained nurse accompanying you, even if you secure a wet-nurse."

I shook my head.

"They have proved inimical to my family," I said, with feeling. "If you can help me to the safer kind you spoke of I shall feel under great obligations."

"And you start when?" he asked.

"The sooner the better," I responded.

My nephew was presented by a nurse in picturesque uniform. He was very red in complexion and his head was partially covered by patches of a blackish down that grew to a point on his forehead. He opened a

slit of his left eye and then sneezed; evidently I affected him unpleasantly. Presently he yawned. I declare, it was absolutely human!

I stroked him with the handle of my umbrella. I knew it was customary to fondle children, and I did not wish to seem indifferent.

Dr. Brown most kindly engaged to find me a suitable nurse, and Miss Smith, the head of the training school, a charming middle-aged lady, undertook to look after Montgomery's wardrobe. The next day a nurse had been chosen—a large, sandy-haired Irish-woman with the expression of a ruminating red-and-white cow.

A few days' delay was necessary to let the nurse place her own baby among friends, and it also appeared that the deficiencies of Montgomery's layette were more radical than had been supposed. He had no cloak and cap. I offered Miss Smith a roll of bills to make the necessary purchases.

"I suppose for so long a journey it is better wise to get a white cloak," she said.

"Excuse me one moment," I answered, and running into the hall I hastily consulted my book. The fourth chapter treated of the clothing of infants. "For hard service a cloak and cap of some inoffensive color will be found more serviceable than white." The lady's opinion was confirmed. I should make my first attempt to combine knowledge and firmness.

I returned to the room blowing my nose, which I felt was an intimation that I had left the room to seek my handkerchief.

"White is too perishable," I said, firmly. "I should like a good serviceable color."

"Faint gray would be pretty," she suggested.

"I prefer *green*," I answered, in an absolute way.

"Green!" she exclaimed, aghast.

"Of not too faint a shade," I said, taking up my hat.

"But, Mr. Murray, such a thing is unusual; it cannot be bought ready made; it is unprecedented."

"Spare no expense," I said, airily, bowing myself out of the room.

A cable from Phil reached me the following day with directions about his wife's grave, and begging me to befriend his baby. I did feel truly sorry for my brother and my heart warmed to his little son. I resolved to do my duty honestly by that child.

Montgomery and his nurse joined me at my hotel the day before we started on our journey East.

I gave a quiet half-hour to "Advice to Young Mothers" before they came, and made myself entirely familiar with the ignorant mistakes to be anticipated in nurses. When I showed Mrs. Houlahan to her temporary nursery I improved the occasion to let her see I was not a person likely to be imposed on.

"I require great vigilance on your part, Mrs. Houlahan," I said, "but never act on your own responsibility, if you can possibly appeal to me. Do not keep the child sitting up too long at a time," I added, with dignity; "it often produces a curvature of the spine; and do not yield to his efforts to stand on his feet till he gets a little older. I should also like you to inculcate habits of great personal neatness by both precept and example."

The fool of a woman stared at me as if she had not half taken in my orders. I hope intelligence does not come to children with their nourishment, or Montgomery will have a poor show.

But few incidents marked our trip East. I made out a list of articles, from the pages of the "Advice," proper for Houlahan's diet, and gave it to the dining-room porter who served me, accompanying it with half of a five-dollar bill that I had cut in two, and promising the other half if no forbidden dainty was allowed her before we reached New York. It worked to a charm. She seemed to find the food to her taste, and Montgomery showed a corresponding appreciation.

Just beyond Omaha, however, the first *contretemps* occurred. In the middle of the night Montgomery be-

gan to cry. His cries quickly developed into screams. Every berth in the car was astir, heads protruded from curtains, and all the married women hastily appeared, in improvised toilettes, to give advice. The unsympathetic male element made unfeeling remarks about its being just their luck to light on a nursery car, and coarse speeches of that nature.

Houlahan sat on the edge of her berth attired in a brown petticoat and red-and-black flannel jacket with emancipated buttons. She flopped Montgomery over on his stomach, and making a pivot of her toes, tried to assuage his agonies by swinging him to and fro on her knees.

I got the porter to turn up the light while I sought "Advice." "If the upper part of the face is distorted," it said, "the pain is most probably in the head, earache being a common affection with young children; if the middle features—by which is meant the nose and upper lip—look for chest trouble; should the mouth and chin be convulsed, the discomfort is probably in the digestive organs." I had gleaned this much information when a wilder paroxysm of crying made me hasten to the baby.

"Turn Montgomery over," I ordered.

You will hardly believe me, but *every sign* was present at once, and I had not had time to study the remedies.

"Undress him," I said, and then hurried back to the light. As I turned the pages my eye caught this sentence: "Twitching of the eyeballs accompanied by squinting heralds the visit of convulsions." I rushed back to look at him once more. He stopped crying and, looking me full in the face, rolled up his eyes and winked.

"Convulsions, by Jupiter!" I exclaimed.

"Get hot water!" screamed all the women.

The porter started for the dining-car.

"Call to him to bring some mustard," said a capable looking young

woman, who I felt was to be my salvation.

We all stood grouped round Montgomery, whose undressing was now accomplished and whose cries were subsiding into deep sighs.

"Let me look at his clothes," said the capable lady, and squeezing them gently in her fingers, she drew out a long needle and thread from the waist of his slip.

III

ON our arrival in New York I determined to go for a few days to the Savoy while the cottage at Hilltop was made ready for our reception. It was still only April and the country seemed cheerless.

Driving up to the hotel I was at cross purposes with myself whether to satisfy the longing I felt to gaze once more on the sights of my beloved New York, or to sink back in the embrace of the closed railroad cab I had hired to avoid recognition on the part of any acquaintances I might chance to pass.

As we drew up in front of the Savoy I jumped out impetuously, and received Montgomery from Houlahan while that person collected the impedimenta incident to prolonged traveling with an infant. A week's training had not been thrown away on a person of my intelligence. I held Montgomery on one arm with easy grace, and his green cloak fell in ample folds below my knees.

"Good-morning, Mr. Murray," said Miss Standard's voice, in my ear.

I nearly dropped my nephew, while my complexion rivaled his in color. My thoughts fairly spun.

"Damnation!"—"Shall I explain?"—"Will it make the situation less absurd if I do?"—"Yes, but I owe it to her."—"I *will!*" and making this grand resolve I turned round, only to find Miss Standard half a block away, walking with Reginald Flight.

At the Savoy I arranged with the management to let a housemaid sit with Montgomery while Houlahan

went to her meals, and I found myself comparatively free.

I avoided my club, because men are so given to asking direct questions as to where you have been and why you went, but feeling in need of amusement I bought a seat at the theatre, and expected some diversion. I got it! Mrs. Standard and a large party filed in, the elder lady occupying the seat farthest from the aisle and next to mine.

She turned an amused, friendly face to me.

"My daughter saw you playing Good Samaritan to an Irishwoman and her baby this morning. Were they millionaires in disguise stopping at the Savoy?"

I should gladly have given my confidence to Honora, but I resented being pumped by her mother.

"Does stopping at the Savoy imply millions?" I asked, seizing the clause of her sentence which seemed safest.

"More or less," she replied. "But perhaps I am indiscreet in my questions."

"My dear lady," I returned, "indiscretion does not lie so much in questions as in answers."

"In that case your prudence is unassailable," she said, with some vexation.

"I should be glad to consider it so," I remarked.

Mrs. Standard turned a cold shoulder.

After the fall of the curtain she determined, apparently, to give me another chance.

"Where have you been hiding, Mr. Murray? It is a long time since we have met."

"*Hiding* is not a pretty word, Mrs. Standard. A person hides only when concealment is necessary."

"Then you have nothing to conceal?" she said, casting a meaning glance at me.

"Nothing but the warmth of my affections and my good deeds," I replied.

"Some people might caution you to suppress your affections until your deeds could bear open discussion."

"That would imply a flattering interest in both my affections and my conduct," I said, impertinently.

"Which I am sure no one feels!" she snapped, and again presented an elderly back.

In the foyer, coming out of the theatre, I found myself close to Honora.

"May I find you at home to-morrow at five?" I asked, anxiously.

"Did mamma say you might come?" she responded, quickly, and with a tone of glad relief.

"I didn't ask her," I returned. "Why, when I've been received at your house all the Winter, should I suddenly have to ask your mother's permission?"

She grew very red.

"Only that we're sailing for England on Saturday and our time is much occupied," and she smiled disingenuously.

"Then it's a long good-bye?" I said, with affected indifference.

"I'm afraid so," she acquiesced, without offering her hand.

Oh, well! Save me from my friends! Here was a girl who had let me make semi-love to her for two months, and who certainly met my advances half-way, ready to dismiss me without a word of explanation, just because my conduct was susceptible of misconstruction. I did not so much blame Mrs. Standard, for she at least had offered me the chance to set myself right with her, but Honora had refused me a hearing. My bad temper whispered that if they had known about Uncle Dangerfield's millions they would have seen nothing but philanthropy in my conduct. At all events, I weighed Honora in my balance and found her wanting. I was really wounded, but I fancy it was more in my self-esteem than in my deeper affections. In the snapping of romantic ties the suffering rarely outlasts the readjustment of one's ideas.

After this experience Hilltop seemed an agreeable retreat. All my dreams lately had set to a home of my own, with Honora as its head; now I

was to have the home, but with Montgomery as the ruling presence.

By the end of the week, just when Honora was sailing out of my life, and I was busy establishing my household, an event occurred which completely changed the face of my existence. Uncle Dangerfield died, leaving his hoards to Philip and me. He had lived almost squalidly in Paris many years, and the amount of his fortune was hardly suspected, even by those who knew him best. As I shrank from public comment on my affairs, I took every precaution to keep an account of my uncle's will out of the newspapers, and as its wording gave no clue to the amount he left, it excited little attention. Later, the inheritance tax would fix the valuation, but for a little while I could still feel that my friends prized me for myself alone. The lawyers urged the necessity of Phil's return, and I cabled him to that effect. Boylike, he chose to come back by the longest route—India, the Suez Canal and, of course, Paris—so we could not hope to see him before August at the earliest. For the present I intended making no changes in my habits of living, beyond those already made necessary by my obligations to the baby.

I gave up several days to getting the cottage in running order. I added a pair of horses to the noble stud that had figured so prominently in Dearborn's inventory, sent down a T-cart for myself and a perambulator for Montgomery, and as a finishing touch introduced a long-distance telephone.

My servants appeared capable—all but Houlahan—and they took the deepest interest in the child.

When once the household settled down I had comparative peace. Montgomery grew apace. His complexion became the regulation lily-and-rose tint, and his eyes quite distinct. His backbone showed a disposition to stiffen, and his grimaces did not always end in a howl.

As I said, matters were going so smoothly that I felt almost happy; indeed, I made a plan to run on to New-

port for a few days—but how vain the purposes of parents, even transient ones!

An hour before my train started, my cook—a most intelligent person—telephoned that Montgomery had disappeared! It seemed that his nurse had taken him out in the morning, and up to the time of the cook's telephoning—4 P.M.—had never reappeared.

I rushed to the ferry and took the first train to Hilltop. Why had I been such an ass as to suppose my masculine wits equal to contending with these unexpected vagaries on the part of Houlahan!

My servants could throw some light on the subject, which encouraged me to dismiss the idea that he had been kidnapped. A child belonging to the gardener of the place next to mine had just died of malignant measles, and Mrs. Houlahan had strolled, with the baby, down to the house to see the funeral start. It was suggested that she might have been invited to drive with the mourners to the cemetery, and the distance being great, it would take all day to go and come. This, however, was only a surmise on their part.

I went to work on that clue, and found that some workmen on the next place had seen a woman, with a baby in a green cloak, get into one of the carriages. I was also able to identify Montgomery's perambulator, standing under a tree near the porch of the gardener's house. I started to wheel it home, but recalling the contagion to which it had been exposed, I decided to leave it as a gift to the gardener. For two hours I walked up and down my piazza, too nervous to enjoy even the evening papers, and finally, at seven o'clock, a dusty country hack drawn by two exhausted horses drew up to the gate, and Houlahan heavily descended. Montgomery was asleep, and apparently in excellent health. Houlahan was somewhat unsteady in her gait, and there was that glassy look in her eye which grief sometimes imparts to funeral parties. She lurched against the gate-

post, and I called sharply to her to be careful.

"You nearly knocked the child's head," I said.

"Lave the babe to me," she answered, loftily. "Sure, you have me heart scalded with the rules of you."

"You forget yourself," I said.

"Forgit mesilf!" she repeated.

"Why don't you projuce your book for the manes to make me remimber!"

"You have been drinking," I said, sternly.

She sank into a large piazza chair and burst into tears and reproaches. Her character was taken away entirely, and it was hard the blessed lamb could not go for a drive without getting his Nanna into trouble, so it was, but she'd be leaving him anyhow, as she was going to California in the morning. This last refrain took on a musical cadence and ran through mutterings that lasted for ten minutes.

I got Dearborn on the telephone and explained the case. I demanded an intelligent trained nurse—"as near a lady as possible," I added, in my folly—"and some bottled food for Montgomery."

Dearborn promised aid in two hours. Presently he rang me up.

"Meet the nine o'clock train," he said. "You will find both nurse and food on board."

Blessed relief!

Montgomery still slept. I was divided in my mind as to whether he had been drugged or was sickening for the measles. He slept so heavily, and a pink rash was coming out over his face and neck. I was in an agony of anxiety. Houlahan was locked in her room and I had the key. I did not mean her to touch the baby in her condition.

The nine o'clock train from town was due at 10.05. I ordered the T-cart, and by fast driving reached the station just as the locomotive with its glowing Cyclops eye was turning the last curve. The groom sprang to the horses' heads and I hurried to the platform.

It was a superb night. The ugly

little station, with its gay flower beds and the name Hilltop done in white pebbles, was almost romantic in the moonlight.

The train brought much merchandise and but one passenger, a stately young lady in a close-fitting tailor-made costume and a black hat with plumes. She was not the person I wanted, and I called to the conductor to hold on for a moment.

"I'm expecting a nurse," I explained.

"Only one ticket to Hilltop, and there she is," he answered, professionally; "but there's a basket of bottles for you."

I now approached the lady.

"Can I be of any service?" I asked.

"You expected to be met by friends?"

"I am a trained nurse going to Mr. Murray," she said, simply. "Are you he?"

"How stupid of me!" I stammered.

"I am Mr. Murray, and much relieved and delighted to see you. Let me get your trunk, Miss——"

"Hetherington," she replied.

I helped her into the T-cart, and taking my place beside her, was turning the horses' heads homeward when she checked me.

"I think we must take the baby's food," she said.

Her voice was charming. Her gestures and the easy grace with which she carried herself denoted the woman of breeding.

While the groom fetched the basket my attention was free to wander from my horses to my companion. Her wide-brimmed hat threw the face into shadow, but I could see enough to note the loveliness of the delicate profile. It was not a merry face, though the lips yielded themselves readily to smiles; the eyes met yours with a concentrated attention which was probably the result of her training. Honora's mind had seldom lent itself unreservedly to my conversation, but then she was very much occupied with city reform clubs and College Settlements, and I knew her wandering attention—even when her eyes were fixed on a bonnet in front

of her—was but another proof of her superiority.

This young person puzzled me; my calculations were simply knocked endwise. A trained nurse meant to me an intelligent upper servant. I found myself in the presence of my social equal—nay, of my superior, for she was without the self-consciousness that was tormenting me.

I didn't know what to talk to her about. It is not easy to entertain strange young ladies about the unpleasantness of a drunken nurse and the necessity for weaning an infant. Still, some explanation of my troubles and her duties had to be made, and I resolved to make it in the most radical way.

I opened my lips to begin, and found myself saying:

"What a superb night it is! I had meant at this hour to be enjoying the moonlight on the ocean from the Cliffs at Newport, but I fancy it is more beautiful here. There is a mystery of haze and shadow in a hill country which you lose by the sea."

She did not seem to care about discussing the charms of the moon, though she responded with some polite commonplace. Presently she introduced the vital subject herself.

"Your little son has a worthless nurse, I believe, and you have decided to wean him."

I let the parentage of Montgomery pass without comment and gave her a rapid sketch of his short life, terminating with his exposure to measles and the backsliding of Houlahan.

"You may make your mind easy in regard to the measles," she said. "Young children rarely take contagious diseases."

I thought she made too light of the situation.

"He has already broken out with *something*," I said, reproachfully.

"Indeed?" was her only answer.

"He is either very ill, or he has been drugged," I went on, "for he has never waked since he returned from the funeral, and generally he's a lively little chap."

We turned in at the gate. Yells rent the air.

"Oh," I said, "it is measles, and not drugging."

"It's the cry of a hungry child," she said, smiling.

She disappeared up stairs, and in ten minutes quiet reigned in the house.

I bestirred myself to have a nice little supper laid for two, and told the waitress to beg Miss Hetherington to come down. She sent word that it would be impossible for her to leave the baby that night, and she needed nothing, as she had dined before leaving town.

I felt vexed, for I had wanted to consult with her as to the best way of dismissing Houlahan, and besides, I was most anxious to see her by lamplight. I found myself speculating as to whether she would be equally lovely without her hat, and trying to puzzle out some story that would account for so fine a creature condescending to so humble a vocation. I could not rid myself of my prejudices against professional women.

I sent her a note, enclosing the key of Houlahan's door, and begging her to set the breakfast hour most convenient to herself.

The next day was Sunday, and when I came down at ten o'clock I heard Miss Hetherington had breakfasted hours before, that Houlahan was confined to her bed with a severe headache, and that Montgomery had taken his bottle like an angel.

At the end of an hour I saw a white-clad figure flitting under the trees. It was Miss Hetherington. She had Montgomery in her arms, and made a Madonna-like picture.

"How are the measles?" I asked, making my most courtly bow.

"They have resolved themselves into a severe case of prickly heat," she answered, laughing. "I understand he has been muffled in a heavy cloak and cap all through this terrible heat. I only wonder he did not melt away entirely."

"Advice to Young Mothers" never said a word about changing

his clothes in Summer," I said, solemnly.

"I see," she returned. "You have a book for consultation. May I see it?"

I got it for her, reluctantly, for I had marked what I considered important, and I have always valued my judgment too much to care to subject it to criticism.

Montgomery was asleep, and Miss Hetherington sat with him under the trees. I read my paper on the piazza, but I could see her quite well round the edge of my *Tribune*. Presently she took up the "Advice," and she laughed till she nearly dropped the child. I felt perfectly furious. I decided to spend the rest of the day in town, and consulted my time-table, only to find that a hyper-religious management forbade the running of Sunday trains.

In spite of my annoyance I looked forward to lunch as the excitement of the day, and was disgusted to meet the waitress going up stairs with a tray. I had expected to have nurse's meals served in this way—until I saw her! Now I was piqued and rather angry.

Toward three o'clock Miss Hetherington came out of the house in a flimsy sort of frock which showed her neck and arms under the flimsiness, and was much befrilled. She had on the hat with plumes and she carried a prayer-book. She spoke to me of her own accord.

"The baby is asleep and will not wake up for several hours, and your servants have offered to take turns in sitting with him while I walk to church. You know trained nurses are entitled to their time for exercise every day," she added, gravely.

"My dear Miss Hetherington," I exclaimed, "what do you take me for! Have I shown such a niggardly disposition during our short acquaintance that you have to excuse your moments of leisure to me? You make me ashamed!"

She asked some questions about the way to church, and I hastened to offer her the carriage, but she de-

clined it. Soon after she had gone I ordered it for myself, and by the time it was ready I imagined the service would be drawing to a close. The walk was both dusty and long—close to two miles—and I thought she could not resent my driving her home.

The little church at Hilltop was most picturesque. It was of a yellowish stone nearly covered with Japanese ivy, and crowned a little wooded eminence. The day was warm and still and the windows all open, so that the music floated to me as I waited under the trees. They were singing an anthem, "Oh, Rest in the Lord!" and it seemed to me a sort of religious lullaby. I felt soothed and strangely happy. One voice, a rich, sweet soprano, led the others. I felt it could belong only to Miss Hetherington, and I listened, spellbound. My groom—a Hilltop lad—left the horses' heads and under the pretense of adjusting a twisted rein, came close to the carriage.

"That's Mr. Cheatham's daughter singing. Don't she sing beautiful?" he asked.

Now Mr. Cheatham was my butcher. I hated the groom—he had dispelled an illusion.

In a moment the congregation came out, chiefly rich, second-rate country residents, a few English servants and the boarders at a hotel in the next village.

Miss Hetherington stood for a moment on the step, unfurling her parasol, and I approached her.

"I have come to drive you home," I said, diffidently, fearing a rebuff.

She colored slightly, but acquiesced with a murmur of thanks. Her conduct had hitherto conveyed the impression that she resented being treated as a guest, but required a recognition of her professional rights, and those only. I tried to keep my conversation on strictly business lines. We discussed the best mode of dealing with Houlahan, and decided that I should take her to town myself in the morning and start her on her journey across the continent.

We talked about nursery refrigerators till my tongue felt frozen, and I gravely asked her opinion about the short-coating of Montgomery.

We were getting on swimmingly when, at the top of a hill that lay before us, we saw a buggy dragged by a galloping horse and coming down on us at a frightful pace. As it drew near we saw there was a child in it. He was clutching the arm of the seat and screaming in a paroxysm of terror. I threw the reins to Miss Hetherington, and springing out, I stood ready to make a grasp for the bridle. Seeing me in the middle of the road, the horse slightly checked its speed, so that my task was easier than I had feared, but even so I was quite unable to keep my footing, and found myself half-running, half-swinging from the harness. However, I managed to stop the animal, and when the excitement of the moment was over I was hardly surprised to find I had wrenched my wrist so badly that it was giving me excruciating pain.

I led the runaway back to where the T-cart was waiting and tried to think out a plan by which the one able-bodied man of the party—Tom, the groom—could drive two vehicles at the same time, for I was completely out of the running.

"You are hurt," said Miss Hetherington, coming toward me. "You are as white as a sheet."

She manipulated my arm most deftly, giving me no pain. She made a sling of my handkerchief, and having bandaged my wrist with her own waist-ribbon, she slipped my arm into the support. The pain was so much diminished that I felt equal to driving, but she was opposed to any risk, and declared herself an accomplished whip.

Tom had been holding all three horses. I now bade him drive the child back to the village he came from, and helping Miss Hetherington to the driving seat with my uninjured hand, I took my place beside her. She picked up the reins; they seemed to fall of themselves into their proper

place, the motion of her strong yet pliant wrist testifying to the lightness of her hand.

I watched the almost perfect form with which she handled her horses, and finally, bursting with admiration, I exclaimed:

"How tremendously well you do it! Who taught you to drive?"

"Howlett," she said, simply.

I longed to ask why a trained nurse had needed lessons in driving from the great master in the art, but I knew my only chance with her lay in respecting her reserve, so we chatted about the runaway until we reached our own door.

How I blessed that sprain! One day I inked it to keep it black and blue, and when she put the wet compress on it the ink spread in the most convincing manner—but apparently she did not notice it.

I confided to her that my meals were distasteful to me because the waitress cut up my food so stupidly, and finally, by continued complaints, I persuaded her to dine with me in order to see that I was properly cared for.

She was so coy, this beautiful bird I had caged! Alas, my cage had an open door; she could fly away when she pleased.

I beguiled the hours I had to pass in town. If the telephone rang my heart was in my throat. I believe I could have welcomed bad news of Montgomery for the sake of exchanging a few words with Miss Hetherington over the wires.

Finally the dreaded moment arrived. She came to me in her white frock and demure little cap one afternoon, when I was smoking my cigar after getting home from town, and just when I was feeling that this wretched little cottage was the most perfect place on earth.

"I am wasting my time and your money, Mr. Murray," she said. "Any sensible nurse can manage the baby now, and you will pay her by the month what you pay me by the week."

"It isn't a question of money," I

answered. "If you knew what a difference your coming has made in the comfort of my house you would not speak of leaving me." There was entreaty in my tone.

"Still, I cannot stay on indefinitely," she answered, blushing and laughing. "I shall write to the Babies' Hospital for a nurse for you, and then I must go."

"You will wait for a few weeks to see the new nurse installed?" I pleaded. "You must see how helpless I am."

"A few *days*, perhaps," she conceded, reluctantly.

Suddenly a wave of shame spread over my face.

"Miss Hetherington!" I exclaimed, "I have never given you a cheque, and you have been here how long? Somehow I could not associate you with such sordid transactions."

The last speech nettled her and brought out the professional manner I had learned to dread.

"I have been here three weeks to-day," she said, coldly. "You owe me exactly seventy-five dollars."

I went into the house, and sitting down at my desk, I began filling out a cheque. When I came to the name I remembered I had never heard her full name. Throwing down my pen, I went back to the piazza to ask her, and then I saw something that set my heart beating.

Montgomery was in his carriage, wide awake and cooing, and Miss Hetherington knelt by his side. She was covering his dimpled hand with kisses and her eyes were full of tears. I could have flung myself down beside her, but I knew too well how such an ebullition would be received.

She sprang to her feet, and I put my question in my mannish, tactless way.

"My name? Mary," she answered.

"I might have known it," I burst out. "There was no possibility of its being anything else. It is the most adorable name in the world."

She looked at me in surprised displeasure, and picking up the child, disappeared with him into the house.

Would she never allow me to tell her what was burning to get itself told? I had only a week, at the utmost, and I did not dare face any more snubs that day.

IV

THERE is a tradition in my family of a town-bred ancestress who exclaimed: "What should we do for eggs and milk without that useful animal the cow?" This is my feeling in regard to the telephone. It transcends itself. I am not sure but that the King of Denmark would have got his boots for his coronation if he had only desired to have them sent by telephone instead of telegraph, the great drawback being that the useful animal did not exist in 1863.

By the telephone Houlahan's ticket and berth were secured to San Francisco; by the same means a nursemaid was engaged from the Babies' Hospital—indeed, I had a *viva voce* conference with her, and agreed to bring her to Hilltop with me the next afternoon. The day of my bereavement was coming on apace, and I dared do nothing to show my unhappiness, for fear of precipitating the event.

On Tuesday a telegram came for Miss Hetherington. She appeared at dinner in her pretty, flimsy frock; it was an indication she felt her office as nurse at an end.

"My mother has arrived from Europe," she explained after a time, "and has sent for me to meet her to-morrow at the house in town. As my stay here would be for only a few more days, I have decided not to return, so I must ask you to send me and my trunk to the station in the morning. May I cut up your chop?"

"I don't want any more dinner," I said, sulkily.

"Are you ill? Does your wrist hurt you?" she asked, with a tone of concern.

"Something hurts me," I admitted, "but I think it's farther up my sleeve."

"Your shoulder?" she surmised.

"Up my sleeve and down again on the inside," I explained, not wishing to make the track to my heart too plain.

"Evidently too subtle a case for a nurse. Something, perhaps, that had better be left to the great physician Time—" and she smiled, half in mischief, half sadly.

How could she go so placidly through her dinner and even dawdle over a sweet course! Finally, when I saw her take a peach on her plate, I threw manners to the winds, and begging her to pardon the discourtesy, I pushed back my chair and flung out to the piazza.

She must have heard my restless pacing up and down, and perhaps her feelings were touched, for in a few minutes she came through the lighted hall and stood in the doorway. Her eyes were blinded by the sudden transition to the dark piazza, and she softly called my name.

"I believe I left my knitting under the trees," she said. "Will you get it for me?"

"Show me which tree," I said, with guile.

Together we went down the steps and across the lawn. The moon was up, but a great hill shut out its jocose face as yet. When we reached the seat under the cedar I turned on her.

"Why did you tell your mother where you were?"

She drew herself up in the proud, resentful way I had grown to know so well, but the real distress in my voice softened her.

"Not tell my mother! What terms do you suppose I am on with her, that you can conceive of my concealing my whereabouts from her?"

If I had dared I should have answered: "Beastly, since she can afford to own a town house and take her pleasure in Europe, while you work for your living;" but self-preservation made me crawl.

"Forgive me," I said. "The misery—I mean the dislike—of losing your company makes me unreasonable."

It seemed to strike her that her re-

lation to her mother might be open to misconstruction on the part of an outsider, for she said, with some feeling:

"I should like to tell you how I came to be a nurse, if you care to hear."

"Care to hear!" I repeated. "Isn't it plain enough that you are all I do care to hear about? Don't you see how it is with me—that I love you? Can't you like me a little bit? enough—enough to marry me, Mary?" and I sank on the seat beside her in a passion of pleading.

"How can you!" she began, with tears in her voice. "How can you expect me to believe in the affection of a man who can speak like this to me within four months of his wife's death! Oh, Mr. Murray!"

"I'm not a widower!" I exclaimed, in horror.

"Is Mrs. Murray alive? Then you insult me!"

It dimly came to me that she had once called Montgomery my son. What an ass I was!

"There never was a Mrs. Murray," I began; but this capped the climax, for, without waiting to hear another word, she stalked proudly toward the house.

"Miss Hetherington—Mary," I commanded, "stop and listen to me. There was a Mrs. Murray—the baby's mother—but she was my brother's wife. Oh, my love, my love! how can you be so suspicious and cruel, when you know how you hurt me?"

And then and there she turned and held out her hands, and that curious old fossil of a moon came out and spied on us.

It often happens with people in love that they have talked themselves out before the engagement point is reached, but with Mary and me there was no such embarrassment. We had whole histories to tell each other. Mary told me how her father had lost his money soon after she was grown up, and how the distress and mortification had really killed him; that she and her mother had lived abroad on their small income, and at the end of two years her mother had married an

extremely rich man, whom Mary found unbearable; that she had come back to this country and taken her hospital training with her mother's full consent, for they were so truly sympathetic that Mrs. Hetherington—now Mrs. Mines—would not think of insisting on her sharing an uncongenial home. She had, however, made over what was left of their money to Mary, so that she had some means beyond her professional income.

And I told her about my life and about Phil, and about everything except Honora Standard. Viewed in the light of my great happiness, that episode shrank to such pitiful proportions that it did not seem worth mentioning.

At this point of our conversation came the sound of wheels at the front gate, and the postboy's lantern glowed red in the moonlight.

"There may be a letter from my mother," said Mary, rising, and I reluctantly abandoned our seat under the cedar and followed her to the house.

The letter proved to be for me, in Phil's crabbed fist, and I might as well give it, though I blush for him:

Paris, August 10.

DEAR MONT:

Don't think me cold-hearted when I tell you I am engaged again [the "again" was scratched out], but I shall not be married till my six months of mourning are past. I think you know my dear girl. It is Honora Standard. I found her and

her mother in Paris, and I don't know how it happened, but somehow we seemed to fall in love with each other at once. Isn't she perfectly great! You, who know her, can judge of my luck. All Paris is ringing with the amount of Uncle Dangerfield's fortune. I wonder who let the cat out of the bag! I say, Mont, isn't it queer to be rich?

Mrs. Standard and Honora say they think the way you took charge of my baby was splendid. They long to see you, to tell you so.

Your aff'ate brother,
PHILIP MURRAY.

P. S.—Honora says if you are tired of the baby we will take charge of him as soon as we are married.

"Well, that is handsome of Phil!" I said, in tones of suppressed indignation. "He is willing to take charge of his own child in case he is forced to!"

Mary put her dear arm round my neck.

"If they feel that way, don't you think he might stay always with his uncle and aunt?" and she blushed most divinely as she mentioned her future relationship to Montgomery.

I am not by nature secretive, but there are two things about which I have been reticent. I have never told Mary how near Mrs. Standard came to bagging my fortune instead of Phil's; and in view of certain admonitory letters sent to Manila, I have never told Phil that Mary was a trained nurse.



FRIENDSHIP

THY kindness wraps me as in silken folds
And shields me from the keenest winds that blow;
Thy strong hand clasps my weak one, and upholds
Me on the stony path wherein I go.
Such kindness I have never known before,
But oh, dear friend, it should be less—or more!

EDITH BIGELOW.

THE KEY

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox

ALL that I craved belonged to me;
God held the gifts, and I the key

He held them waiting my command,
And yet I would not understand.

In petulance and discontent
Full many a wasted year was spent.

I cried, "How cruel is the Fate
That bids me work and weep and wait

"For things that make life worth the living,
Nor rob the Giver in the giving.

"A little joy, a little wealth,
Result for toil, abundant health,

"A chance to *do*, a chance to *be*—"
And then I looked—and saw the key!

Right in my heart I carried it,
Divinely fashioned, formed to fit

The lock of God's great Reservoir,
Which held the things I thirsted for.

The key was Love, pure gold, a-crust
With glittering gems of swerveless trust.

It fits all doors, it turns all locks,
It leads the way through walls and rocks,

It lifts the bolt, unbars the gate,
And shows where all life's treasures wait.

Oh, are there heights thy feet would press?
Use Love, the key to all success!



ALL THE STYLE

JAGGLES—What's the proper thing to have your suit case covered with?
WAGGLES—Foreign labels.

THE WOMAN WHO LOOKED AHEAD

A FABLE FOR THE FAIR

THERE was once a Woman who Became the Admiration of her Friends, owing to the Manner in which she Employed the Period of her Engagement to the Man of her Choice. She was Far from Wasting the Hours in Matinées and Walks and Drives, as did the Other young Women of her Acquaintance. She went to Cooking Classes, Home Nursing Lectures and Kindergarten Training Schools instead.

"Marriage," said she, "is a Serious Thing. It is Sickening to me to Observe Women rush Lightly into the Solemn Responsibilities of the Home and of Motherhood, entirely Without any Previous Training." So that at the Time of her Marriage there was Very Little that she Did Not Know.

Her Husband had Regretted the Loss of the Matinées, the Walks and the Drives during the time of their Engagement. "Now that we are Married," he said, "I Hope you will Find the Time for Some of These Things. It will be a Gay Season in town this year. We will Improve the Passing Hour."

"I am Glad," replied his Wife, "that One of us can Look Beyond the Passing Hour into the Future. I am Convinced that Failure to do this is Responsible for the Wrecked Families we see All About us. For You and Me the City is all Very Well, but we Owe our Helpless, Innocent Children a Better Home. Children need the Country. They must Grow up in the Midst of Cows and Hay and Green Trees. Any Book will Tell you That. An Apartment is not a Home."

So they Bought an Abandoned Farm on the Outskirts of a Suburb and Built Up a Home there. The Woman was Sustained by her Principles, but her Husband Disliked the Country. In Time he Lost his Digestion Catching Trains. Quite Often he Lost his Trains, too. On the Whole, they were Not very Happy there. And they Never Had any Children.

This teaches us that Prevention is Sometimes Worse than Cure.

JOSEPHINE D. DASKAM.



EQUIVOCAL EMBARRASSMENT

WE once were taught: "Do good by stealth
And blush to find it fame," but now
A man who uses well his wealth
Has got to make it known somehow.

And if he blushes in these days—
Supposing always that he could—
It doesn't follow that his ways
Have been particularly good.

E. PERCY NEVILLE.

SOME ENGLISH PRINCESSES

By Mrs. Sherwood

I HOPE the amiable Princess Beatrice is to be one of those fortunate women who "have no history." She was sheltered from the storms of life by her mother's great partiality, until Fate, tired of seeing her so calmly happy, took away her beloved Henry of Battenberg, who died of fever contracted in the horrible Boer land, leaving her with her aged mother and four children to occupy her broken heart as best they could.

Now that the Queen has gone the status of the Princess in England is very much changed; she can no longer live in a palace; she steps down from Osborne House to a smallish house in the beautiful Isle of Wight, of which she is the Governor. The Queen left a million dollars to her, as to each of her other daughters—prudent old Queen! But the Princess Beatrice must now yield precedence to her nieces, daughters of the reigning monarch, Edward the Seventh. And the King has issued a Royal command that his sisters can no longer order a Royal carriage from the Royal stables. This may seem to outsiders a small and absurd thing for a great king to do, but about the English Court everything is tied up with red tape. It has always been necessary—so Lady Ely told me—to order one's carriage from the Royal stables the day before it is required, even to drive about London. She came to see me in Harley street in one of the Queen's carriages, and I noticed as she left my door the curious crowds attracted by the sight of the Royal crest. Of course, as a lady-in-waiting she was entitled to the privi-

lege, but, as she afterward said: "It is much shorter work to take a cab." However, in England they think much of these privileges.

I do not believe, however, that princesses have a "very good time." Lord Houghton used to say that we Americans were the only people who *said* we "had a good time." I asked him if we were not the only people who really *had* "a good time." Certainly we have none of the chains of gilded slavery hanging about us, as have the daughters of Royalty. The princes always have the freedom of boyhood and manhood, and if they do not make any entangling alliances, and sometimes if they do, they can and do have a "very good time"—always excepting poor Rudolph of Austria, who, an old Austrian Court lady told me, was whipped to death and every bone in his body broken by the uncles of the pretty girl who died with him. This is an ugly legend, but probably true. Certainly his mother, the beautiful Empress, never smiled again after he was found dead, and her own life and her cruel death are one of the tragedies of Royalty. The very lifting of a young girl to a throne often is the beginning of misery that arrests her own individual development and happiness. She is something to be gazed at and talked about and criticised, but never to know the joy of freedom. The throne overshadows many a passionate heart beating high for love and liberty, which it is never to possess.

Of the daughters of Queen Victoria the Crown Princess of Germany, now the Empress Dowager, mother to the

redoubtable William, had the most talent and the least beauty, with the apparently happy lot of being wife to the best fellow in Europe, "Unser Fritz;" but she had a lifelong quarrel with his mother, with Bismarck and with the German people. They all hated her and accused her of a flirtation with her faithful servant, Seckendorf; even now, in her dying days, they publish accounts of her secret marriage to him. Her devotion to her "Unser Fritz" did not stop their mouths. Well may the Emperor say, as he did at Bonn the other day, that "the German fault is envy and hatred of other Powers." This Princess-Empress put the final touch to her unpopularity by her mistake in refurnishing with English furniture, for Queen Victoria on one of her visits, the apartments of the beautiful Queen Louise, the high priestess of the German people. This nearly provoked a riot. Why should a clever woman have made such a blunder? Because she has her mother's fault of a very dogged obstinacy! "My will or nothing," has been the motto of both.

Then she had a lifelong quarrel with her son. Many an old clergyman, looking on, has condemned him, perhaps unjustly, and has quoted the tremendous Scripture, "He who mocketh at his father and obeyeth not the law of his mother, the eagles of the mountain shall pluck out his eye, and the young eagles shall eat it," as the medical experts all over the world tell of his disease of the ear, and claim that it mounts to the brain and will eventually push out one of his eyes. Furthermore, this Princess of Great Britain had to see her Fritz die the dreadful death of cancer in the throat, and now has to meet a lingering death herself. Yet she had many years of honor and splendor. Queen Victoria always gave her precedence over all the other children, except the Prince of Wales.

The Princess Helena, who married Prince Christian, always living in Cumberland Lodge, near Windsor

Castle, sharing in all the Royal festivities and attending her mother at many public affairs, seemed to have the calmest, most respectable of uneventful lives. She wrote a very good biography of her charming sister Alice, a most unhappy Princess but one of the saints of this world.

The Duke of Hesse, who married this dear girl, was not true to her, and his mistress, or morganatic wife, as she claimed to be, published a book that threw much light on the unhappiness of this admirable woman, who could never speak even to her mother of her heart-break. Poor Alice! she loved her little children, and she had to see one of her boys killed by falling out of a window of that cruel stone palace to the ground; and another sickened and died of diphtheria, whose dying breath she drew in with his last kiss, thus in a pious way committing suicide—as many think, intentionally. She was not sorry to die, perhaps, poor Alice, best and sweetest and most saintly of the Queen's daughters. It is her daughter who is the present Czarina of Russia—and oh, how she pleaded with her grandmother to not make her marry the Czar! She dreaded Russia, and she has not had a bed of roses there. How should we like to tread every day over a floor that we know has been undermined by anarchists? Yet that is the fate of the Czarina of Russia. Her sister, called "the Royal Ophelia," has been the most unhappy wife of a Grand Duke.

The gay and very pretty Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, has had the character and talent to make for herself an independent career. Falling in love with her brother's tutor, the handsome Canon Duckworth, when very young, her correspondence with him was discovered by a lady-in-waiting and carried to the Queen. Woe to the Princess Louise from that moment! and woe to the lady-in-waiting, to whom she has never spoken since! I met them both at Aix and witnessed the chilling cold shoulder of Royalty; for if a princess can do nothing else

she can snub royally, and her snubs kill!

The Queen married off her royal Louise to a subject, the Marquis of Lorne, as all the world knows; a very clever man, who has had "a blessed blue time of it" ever since, as a London wit observes. Always walking on a different carpet from his wife, being reminded of the difference of rank forty times a day, it is only the fact that Louise is so sprightly, so pretty and so knowing that has kept them together. She is fond of saying that, for fear they would have to marry her, "two men got married and three left England." Not that they would not have liked her if she had been Lady Louise or Miss Louise, or barmaid Louise—for she is a June rose and as gifted as she is pretty; but they all dreaded to be a Royal son-in-law and to be made to feel every day the penalty of the slightest infringement of the stiffest etiquette in the world. It was freely asserted at the first Jubilee that the grooms were told to put a thistle under the saddle of the Marquis of Lorne, as the Royal procession left Buckingham Palace for Westminster Abbey. He was to have ridden in the procession of princes, but he did not. Three times he was thrown, and later on he crept round by Bird Cage Walk with a very sullen and discontented face, on a sorry nag, and joined the Royalties there! It was even said that the Crown Prince of Germany, "Unser Fritz," afterward Emperor, had been a party to this outrage, as he had remonstrated with the Queen for permitting a man not of Royal blood to ride with him and the Prince of Wales in the pageant, in what was the prettiest bit of all that picture, the procession of princes. I happened to see this historic spectacle myself.

Afterward I met the Princess Louise and the Marquis of Lorne at Aix. I think they take the situation philosophically, as both are scholars, artists and individuals above the average intellectually. She is a very gifted woman, a good sculptor, a first-rate artist with her pencil and one of

the most charming women I ever met. She showed her independence of character by shaking off the tyranny of courts at Aix and dancing the "Highland schottische" in the public room at the Casino. The French people thought it was the cancan, which in its lively attitudes it resembles, and a dozen old English ladies wrote to the Queen the next day!

The Princess Louise got a good scolding, and the Marquis of Lorne was sent on for his wife. She left soon after, to everyone's sorrow, for she enhanced the gaiety of nations, as Garrick's death killed it. "I never was a favorite of the Queen," she said, quite frankly.

It was pathetic to see how she loved innocent fun, how she sighed for it. Now that she is Duchess of Argyle and the favorite sister of King Edward the Seventh, she may have a broader life. She used to give delightful teas at old Kensington Palace, and was fond of the society of artists and literary people. She "sent for" Wagner and met him at Lord Houghton's, to the great delight of little Mr. Haweis, who wrote "Music and Morals," and who had the honor of arranging the meeting. With these talents and a cheerful temper, the Princess Louise has had "a good time." Not so good as she would have had as the daughter of an earl, or of one still lower down in the scale of human greatness. They all have good health, these daughters of the Queen, and the Princess Louise has the air of never having known a pain or an ache. Everyone will remember her redoubtable following of a salmon in the waters of the Restigouche in Canada. It was a treat to hear how her strong young arms and her pedestrian powers enabled her to catch her fish.

The Princess Beatrice is taller, paler and more lymphatic than Louise. On the 14th of April, 1889, she reached her twenty-eighth birthday at Aix, and I happened to be there and to see her on that occasion. She struck me as a pretty, rather stout girl with an American look and what we call "a

turn-up nose." The French have a prettier name for it, the "*nez Watteau*." Tennyson calls it "a nose tip-tilted like a flower"—prettiest of all.

She has the best eyes in the Royal family. They are fine brown eyes, well set in her head, not that "*fleur de tête*" eye on the outside of her face, which the Queen inherited from George the Third. She has very charming, fresh red lips and a clear white complexion. She is the most simple-mannered, retiring person I ever saw, and the whole English colony united in presenting her with flowers, while all Aix and Chambéry were full of flags and feathers, and bands of music and presentations. She looked frightened to death. She was plainly dressed, as are all Englishwomen on the Continent. No Royalties like to be in war paint when off duty. The Princess was very courteous and smiling, and blushed and stammered as she tried to thank her loyal subjects for their good wishes. In the evening a *fête* had been arranged in her honor at the Villa Mollet, that dependence of the Hôtel de l'Europe, where the Queen lived while at Aix, and the whole place was lighted by colored lanterns, while the local choral unions of Chambéry and Aix marched about, singing "God Save the Queen," "The Marseillaise" and the "Partant pour la Syrie." Fireworks burst from every wooded nook and corner, and from a splendid arch that bore the Royal arms and the order of "George and the Dragon." In colored lights came illuminated the motto, "*Dieu et Mon Droit*," and the name of "Beatrice" shone from many an arch and house front.

For an hour I thought it was a great thing to be a princess, but as I said so to a lady-in-waiting, she shook her head. However, Prince Henry of Battenberg, her affianced lover, was coming that evening, and she doubtless was very happy then and there and for a long time afterward; for she had fought for him stoutly. The Prince of Wales did not like the match, and the Crown Prince and

Princess of Germany were bitterly opposed, as he was only a mediatized Prince; but the Queen carried out the wishes of her favorite daughter and made the match with Battenberg possible. It was, in its short duration, very happy, and the Queen gracefully referred to her widowed daughter in these touching terms: "The baby when the Prince Consort died, the only one who has never left me, I must now try to bridge over the sad gulf made in her young life by the death of her husband, my dearly loved son-in-law; and I am astonished to see with what patience and fortitude she is bearing this great grief, the greatest that can come to a woman."

My attention was first called to the Princess Beatrice by some very charming papers she wrote for *Good Words*, that clever English periodical which was started, I believe, by Dickens. She described a cure she had taken at Aix-les-Bains for rheumatism. Her description was comprehensive, gay, historical and spirited, and foreshadowed for me that delightful Alpine valley which I was afterward to know so well. She was very much impressed by the religious and mediæval character of the people. I was afterward to meet her at the little stone villages of Clarefond, Miery and Monxy, where the peasants still live as they did a thousand years ago, and their children look like pictures by Rembrandt. I met her on the Lac du Bourget, which is of such a greenish blue that it seems as if a flight of mysterious peacocks had left their trailing feathers in it. It lies at the foot of those mountains over which Hannibal took his elephants into Italy by the Little St. Bernard.

Always in attendance on the Queen, this placid girl did not seem to have any individual life of her own. I afterward found that she had a great deal of character; and in a queer little stone village, where the peasants live under the same roof as their horses and cows, their goats and their sheep, where the women wear a gold heart and cross outside their linen

chemisettes as they did hundreds of years ago, this Queen's daughter had made the most sensible and charitable arrangement for having a poor little lame boy cured of his deformity. He is a stout young peasant now, able to make a good living, and he calls his eldest daughter Beatrice. At that primitive hotel, the Chambottes, where she dined and lunched often, there hangs an autographed photograph of her, presented to the delighted landlady by this gracious young Princess, who had won all their hearts.

"It is very nice to be a Princess," so far as power of giving happiness is concerned. This may recompense her for the freedom of which she is deprived and for the men she "did not marry." But every woman wants her own way occasionally.

The romance of the life of the Princess Beatrice has yet to be fully told. When a young girl she was very fond of the Prince Imperial, Eugène Louis Jean Joseph, the son of Eugénie and the Emperor Louis Napoleon of France, who was killed in Zululand on the 1st of June, 1879. He dearly loved Beatrice, poor boy! and his mother desired the marriage very much, of course. It is said Beaconsfield broke it all up for State reasons, and then Eugène Louis Jean Joseph wanted to go off and be killed. In the Chapelle Ardente of the Edsalls in Windsor Castle, when one sees the beautiful cenotaph showing how he lay after death, with the Zulu assegai wound in his heart, one thinks of that other wound which he had suffered in life. Had they been Darby and Joan they might have been happy. There is engraved on the side of his memorial tomb a beautiful letter to the Queen, written by this noble boy born to be sacrificed to the whim of a prime minister.

When thousands gathered at Camden House to honor his funeral, the Queen and Princess Beatrice coming first, the Queen knelt and prayed at the foot of the coffin, placing on it a wreath of gold laurel leaves with her card. The Princess threw herself on

the platform that led up to the coffin, weeping bitterly. She then placed a wreath of porcelain flowers on the coffin. "I wish it to last forever," she said, and a card was hidden in it with the single word, "Beatrice."

The Prince and Princess of Wales sent a wreath of purple violets and white clematis, and the Prince wrote with his own hand, "In token of affectionate regard for the Prince who lived the most spotless of lives and died a soldier's death, fighting England's cause in Zululand."

Now had they all been as much interested, before he left, in marrying him to Beatrice, all this affecting picture would have been spoiled, but a woman's heart and a man's career might have been saved.

It is not to be wondered at that the Empress of the French, the beautiful Eugénie, very much loves Beatrice. The story goes that she has made her her heir, and she has a very large fortune to leave. Eugénie is our Lady of Calamity, and although not a princess born, has had her share of Royal trials. She is now a white-haired, elderly woman, with, however, the *beau reste*. She is very *grande dame*, and bears her lot in dignified retirement at Chiselhurst, in England.

The Royal Princesses of England are very much in request for the opening of charity bazaars and fairs. They do this service most gracefully. They are all religious, good women and great favorites with the high dignitaries of the Church. It is a great thing to be a bishop anywhere, but in England, to see a bishop escorting a princess is to get up to the Matterhorn, or at least to the Jungfrau, of the smart set. I had the pleasure once in London to attend a "Masque at the Inner Temple" given by the Benchers to the Princess Louise. She is a barrister, a Bench-er herself, and looks, in her black cap and gown, as old Pepys would say, "mighty pretty." They had a play by Ben Jonson in the library, and beautiful music and processions in the grand old Temple Church, and the

gravest and grandest of England's law lords marched with this young woman at their head. She was captain, then, I thought.

In her amusing novel of "A Self-Made Countess," John Strange Winter makes a very great deal of this bazaar-opening power of the Princesses.

No one asks if a princess has a heart. She is in this world for political reasons; she is yet a part of the national entourage; she must suffer and be silent, and this the Princess Beatrice has learned to do.

She was doubtless very fond of the Queen, faithfully obeying her through many dull years, and she was a very pretty figurehead at the Royal dinners. General Grant told me that when he and Mrs. Grant were invited to "dine and sleep" at Windsor Castle he was very much astonished that he was not asked to sit next the Queen; but she put her daughter Beatrice between them and talked across her to him. "The Queen was flanked," he said, with soldierly frankness, "by the Duke of Connaught on one side and by Beatrice on the other, as if none but her own blood were good enough to touch her." Not but that he very much admired the Princess.

At the Jubilee ceremonies I used to see the Princesses Beatrice and Helena (Princess Christian) keeping step behind their little, short mother. They used to look respectfully tired and bored by this task, as she walked around to receive a crowd. And imagine it going on forever! Imagine the deep and lasting disappointment of a life which, starved of its better independence, must be spent in waiting in the shadow of someone else's glory. The shadow of a queen!

I remember them in this attitude at the public festivities of the Jubilee at Windsor Castle and in the Park, where I went to see the Queen lay the cornerstone of the statue to Prince Albert, the women's Jubilee offering to her Majesty. The Queen was very much gratified. She spoke to a poor old woman who, it was said, had walked from Scotland to be present

at the Jubilee—at least I heard the Queen say: "I thank you for taking that long walk to come to my Jubilee." Then she shook hands with the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, who was just being forgiven for having married Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, who was young enough to be her grandson.

All the love of power and the vanity that is born in us naturally were gratified for fifty years in the life of Victoria. But there was little to gratify the hearts of her daughters. They were merely part of the stage setting for the star's performance.

On the occasion referred to the Queen entered her victoria with a sweep; her two Scotch gillies—or her Indian attendants, I forget which—mounted the rumble; the two pale Princesses sat humbly opposite her. And so the Royal cortège disappeared toward that fairylike vision, Windsor Castle.

It will be a blow to these Princesses, now, to walk behind the new Queen and their Royal nieces. They have become of very little consequence. The law of primogeniture has made all women accustomed to being pushed into the corner when the head of the family dies, but few have so far to fall as has Beatrice, the favorite daughter of the Queen. She was doubtless happy enough with Prince Henry of Battenberg. She doubtless loves her children, yet she may marry, as she is a personable woman yet, and her mother left her very well off. Her life, which must be fraught with ennui and disappointment, and now, doubtless, will be made more tiresome by the restrictions of rank, presents a great lesson, the more pathetic that there are no great tragedies in it, only a continuous, perpetual shipwreck, an eternal sense of failure, the outward promise of success with none of its rewards; far from the glorious stimulus of work, with no future, and leashed by the fear of doing wrong and incurring the enmity of kindred. For if the Princess Beatrice should wish to marry a private gentleman, or even one noble and yet not Royal,

her brothers and sisters would object, the Battenberg children would object, and if they did not put her in the Tower, might ostracize her; and if they did not cut off her head, might break her heart, and probably would.

As one sees the splendid paraphernalia of Royalty it looks very interesting to American eyes, and we see the poetry, which to the tired actors behind the scenes has almost lost all its meaning. It is inspiring to arrive in the noble quadrangle of Buckingham Palace, to hear the music of the Guards' Band, to see the

silent, splendid figures of the household troops, the handsomest men in the world. We long to know the men and women who are there either by divine right or by some lucky chance. They are the personages of the hour. The historical palace, the gems of art and those interesting objects of which palaces are such grand conservatories are all interesting.

Why are the faces that greet us so pale and weary? Can it be that a princess does not "have a good time?"



MORT D'AMOUR

WITHOUT a moan, without a parting word,
Love turned away his weary face and died—

He had but one pale mourner at his side,
And through the lonely night she wept, unheard
Of any save the prying wind that stirred

The draperies of the window where the tide
Of dawn poured in at last; and hollow-eyed,
She groped her way, by restless sorrow spurred,
To seek where she might best Love's burial crave.

But Fate refused to grant her any place
Wherein to hide him. "Nay, poor soul," said she,
"Dead Love may never lie within a grave;
But you must watch beside his changed face,
Through bitter years of barren constancy!"

CHARLOTTE BECKER.



NOT TO BE DECEIVED

"I WONDER," said Fenderson, "if Mrs. Gayleigh reads all the stories the newspapers print about her."

"Of course not," replied Grimshaw. "Even if she did, you don't suppose she'd believe them, do you?"



THE GENUINE MANUFACTURERS

THE PROFESSOR—Who are the men who make history?
THE PUPIL—The historians.

THE COIFFING

WITH skill and grace in days that were,
 In Louis Seize's sunny France,
 He needs must strive, a brave *coiffeur*,
 A beauty's beauty to enhance.
 The while she dreams of hunt and dance,
 Amid the scent of musk and myrrh,
 He combs and curls, as in a trance,
 And clips a tress, unmarked by her.

And in the smile that slants her eyes,
 My lady wonders, worldly-wise,
 What hands will rumple this coiffure;
 While, doomed to build another's snare,
 He toils with fingers skilled and sure,
 Whose love may only touch her hair.

EDGAR P. SHANKS.



ANALYZING HIS AFFECTION

THE young lovers sat beside the waterfall. The rapids and the near-by whirlpool had a strange attraction for the romantic young girl. She had heard the story of the unhappy Indian maiden and the young brave who had gone to their doom, clasped in each other's arms, to the slow music of the Swan Song. That seemed very beautiful to her.

"Jack," she said, "if you saw me struggling in the water near the edge of the falls, would you jump in after me?"

"What would be the use, my dear, when I can't swim?" he answered.

"But at least we should perish together," she replied, bravely.

"Yes, there would be no doubt of that," he returned, shuddering at the sound of the cruel waters.

"But haven't you often said you would die for me?" she asked, piqued at his coldness.

"No, my dear," replied her practical lover. "If you'll remember, I've always told you that I had an undying love for you!"

J. J. O'CONNELL.



IMPORTANT TO KNOW

SHE—The fortune-teller says I shall marry money.
 HE—Good! Did she say how I was to make it?

THE QUEEN'S LOVE

By Justus Miles Forman

“LOVE,” sighed the King, “is a divine distemper.”

“Your Majesty is ever profound,” agreed the Premier; “it is indeed a distemper.”

“I said a divine distemper,” corrected the King, gently.

The Prime Minister’s expression was deferential but stubborn.

“That,” said the King, answering an unspoken dissent, “is because you have no soul. What would a mere Prime Minister be doing with a soul, anyhow?”

“Souls have ever been the sole prerogative of kings,” murmured the Councillor. “I retract the pun,” he added, hastily. “It was perhaps unworthy of me.”

The King smiled.

“Unworthy of you?” he queried, with raised brows. “Oh, I don’t know,” he said, unkindly.

The Minister’s color deepened slightly to a rich full-bodied maroon, and the King allowed himself a pleased chuckle.

“Charles, Charles!” he grieved, presently, “you should never cherish evil passions. Your eyes shriek regicide to deafen one, and regicide is so indiscreet. You know what they do to regicides when they catch them, Charles. And they’d catch you easily; you couldn’t run. You haven’t the waist you once had.”

“You have the advantage of me there, sire,” said the Premier, viciously; “your Majesty’s waist extends from your legs to your royal shoulders.”

The King allowed himself another chuckle and held up to the light appreciatively his little glass of *eau de vie de Dantzig*.

“May I ask, Charles,” he inquired, “if you have read the fables of the late M. de La Fontaine?”

The stout gentleman across the table growled.

“Why do you want to drink that stuff?” he demanded. “Why can’t you drink whiskey and brandy, like a Christian? You won’t have any stomach left at forty.”

The King turned the glass between his fingers, and the thousand little particles of gold leaf in the liqueur—if gold leaf it is—sparkled and shimmered in the light.

“My dear, my dear,” he protested, gently, “again your limitations! A liqueur fit to wake the blessed Olympians is as far above and beyond you as the divine distemper of love. You have never loved, Charles.”

“Thank God!” said the stout gentleman, feelingly.

“Now I—” continued his Majesty.

The Minister allowed himself an obvious sneer.

“—I have a soul; a soul above whiskey and—and materialism.”

“A soul for flavored sirups and your neighbor’s wife,” suggested his companion, helpfully.

The King waved a pained protest.

“You put things so baldly,” he complained. “My admiration for the Countess is a matter of affinity. We are kindred souls—”

“I won’t believe it of her!” cried the Premier.

“Her husband does not understand her in the least. Her husband is a clod.”

“Her husband,” observed the Minister, “will some day break his sword-hilt over your august head, and I sha’n’t blame him.”

"Charles, Charles!" murmured the shocked sovereign, "I should have you tried for *lèse-majesté* if there were anyone else to quarrel with meanwhile. I'm not sure that it wouldn't be rather fun, anyhow. *Mais tiens*, *tiens*, the carriage waits, my lord—I mean the ball. Those poor things can't dance till I come, can they? Run along, *Falstaff*. We'll find the Queen in the ante-room, and she'll have been waiting half an hour. Lord! what a frame of mind she will be in!"

His Majesty led a very stately and not over-exciting quadrille with the wife of the Russian Ambassador. Afterward he skipped about with the Duchesse de Saint-Martel, and told her that their steps suited perfectly, which was a lie. Then he waltzed with the Queen. "Not that I'm giving you the time of your life," he explained to her, "but this sort of thing seems to be required. Waltzing with you is such a lark, Elena!" he continued, untruthfully. "There is a certain warmth about it, a something of—of abandon, a something of repressed passion."

The Queen favored him with a withering glare, and he chuckled.

When the dance was finished he fled to the little Winter garden with its palms and roses and cool dimness and splashing water. The half-dozen couples in possession of the retreat went out at once, backward, and the King called up one of the two gentlemen-in-waiting who had followed him.

"Find the Countess zu Ehrenstern and bring her here," he said.

The Countess appeared with flattering promptness, and the gentlemen-in-waiting, being discreet gentlemen and some time in service, effaced themselves gracefully.

The Countess was an extremely pretty woman, Russian by birth, yellow haired, with wide-set Tartar eyes and a wicked mouth, a very attractive mouth. Her reputation was no worse than that of a dozen others of the Court set, but her presence bore no odor of sanctity. She had a curiously provocative air with men, a

speculative light in her slanting eye, as to say: "Well, what are you going to dare next?"

His Majesty smiled a welcome and the Countess zu Ehrenstern curtsied profoundly, very profoundly, for she had splendid arms and shoulders, and they showed to advantage in a genuflection. The Countess's black gown with the gold spangles might have been called indiscreet. It was undeniably becoming.

The King laughed appreciatively.

"You are immense, Varvara!" he approved. "Come and sit down."

"I have your Majesty's permission?" murmured the Countess.

"You have my Majesty's command," declared the King.

The Countess sat down on the long wicker garden bench where the King had made himself comfortable, and raised both arms to adjust an apparently safe aigrette of tulle and diamonds. She bore the shoulders ever in mind.

His Majesty's eyes showed a strong glint of amusement and he made as if to applaud dumbly. The Countess had the grace to blush.

"The wise fools," observed the King, "who hold that one's little tricks and graces are most successful when they succeed in deceiving, are wrong. Now, if I were a fool, Varvara, I might be quite as fond of you as I am, but I couldn't admire you half so much. You're an artist, Varvara."

"*Le Roi s'amuse*," murmured the lady, sulkily, and examined with close attention a very much bejeweled hand.

"*Natürlich*," admitted his Majesty, examining with even closer attention the same hand. "What else is there for a king to do? Though I'm inclined to believe that in this particular case," he continued, examining another hand—"in this particular case amusement is so strongly tinged with something else that it is in danger of becoming—becoming— Fill in the word for me, Varvara."

"I—I don't know anything about such matters," protested the Countess zu Ehrenstern, unconvincingly.

"You see," complained her sovereign, "a king is such a cabined, cribbed and damnably confined beast! He can't say: '*Tiens*, there's a new piece at the Palais Royal that is said to be uncommonly wicked—I'll run up on the Orient Express to Paris to see it;' or, 'There's a new American troupe opening in London next week—I'll go see if it is as good as it ought to be.' He can't go and play at Monte Carlo as he'd like to. It would make a tremendous row. He can't spend a month or two at Shephard's during the season, to see the pretty American girls that talk through their noses. He can't do anything that other men of spirit and sporting tastes spend their lives doing. He's a king, and that means a graven image who isn't supposed to care about anything but signing bills and quarreling with fool advisers. And the worst of it is, nobody even asked me if I wanted to be a king. It isn't fair. However," continued his Majesty, slowly, looking into the eyes of the Countess zu Ehrenstern, "there are compensations."

"Is it nothing to be able to command, sire? Your Majesty is monarch of all you survey," murmured the Countess, dropping her eyes.

The King surveyed his monarchy with interest.

"Why, then," said he, "why, then, it's quite time I took possession."

"Heavens! not there!" cried the Countess. "Powder comes off, as you ought to know by this time. There is—" she hesitated, "there is nothing on my lips."

"That," said the King, "can be remedied."

It was.

"As I said not long since," pursued his Majesty, after a pause, "there are compensations for the troubles of a poor monarch."

The Countess appeared to be regaining her breath.

"But you have no idea of what a stupid life I lead, Varvara. If it weren't for you I believe I'd cut it and run. Of course, there's Charles. I derive some satisfaction from bait-

ing Charles; but that grows monotonous."

"The Duke?" she inquired.

"The Duke, precisely. Charles was unkind enough this evening to predict that your excellent husband would one day break a sword hilt over my august head. Charles is at times shockingly plain-spoken."

The Countess giggled. "What are you going to do about the Count?" she asked, presently. "Charles isn't bright, I know, but then—well, he isn't exactly a fool, either."

"Oh, we'll send Uriah to the wars," said the King. "We'll put him in the forefront of the battle. If it's necessary, we will get up a war for his special benefit. Never you fear, we'll dispose of Uriah."

"You—you don't leave one any breath," said the Countess, after a pause, panting a little.

"You shouldn't have such a mouth," complained his Majesty. "It's a—living dare; and—well, I dare a good deal, you know."

The water purred and splashed in the green darkness behind them. Now and then a little puff of wind came in through the open windows beyond the fountain and stirred the long palm leaves and brought a cool fragrance of roses and mignonette. In the ballroom the orchestra was playing "*Morgenblätter*." The music came into the Winter garden faintly, mingled with the murmur of voices and the clink of sabres.

The King was watching the face of the Countess zu Ehrenstern. It held a curiously interesting expression. She smiled slightly, her eyes were very wide, and there was an unwonted light in them, a gleam of excitement.

"*Would* you dare a good deal?" she demanded, turning the excited eyes on her sovereign; "*would* you, sire?" She waved a comprehensive hand about her. "Then chuck it!" she said, simply.

The King drew a long breath and another and another.

"Good God!" he gasped, "do you mean it, Varvara? Do you mean it? Good God!"

The Tartar eyes gleamed in the half-darkness.

"Oh, I mean it, *mon Roi!*" she whispered. "I mean it! Think! no more papers to sign—no more troops to review—no more cornerstones to lay and speeches to make—no more sitting in a gold cage and looking hungrily through the bars at the blessed common world outside—no more form, ceremony, limitations, but the wide, wide world, *mon Roi*, with all it holds—the wide, wide world like a draught of wine—and me!"

She threw up her white arms restlessly, eagerly, as if she were about to take wing, and the Tartar eyes danced riotously.

"Heart of God, what a dare!" said the King, under his breath. "Soul of Mary, what a life!"

He took the face of the Countess between shaking palms and held it close to his. His eyes burned it.

"Would you do it?" he cried. "Are you brave enough, Varvara? Oh, yes, you'd run away with the King. Anybody would run away with the King; but think a bit. Out there, beyond the bars, I shouldn't be a king, you know, but just a common man—a man who wouldn't dare show his face too conspicuously. A common man, understand; not a king. Have you the courage for that, Varvara? Here you're glad enough to—to be favored by the King. Out there you'd be a runaway, with no one to envy you. Have you the nerve for that, my Tartar?"

She threw the white arms about his neck. Something moved and quivered inside him at their warm touch, and her face glowed in the dusk against his.

"Look at me!" said the Countess. "Do you see any doubt in me? Do you see any fear in me? They say you know women. Did you think I loved the King? Ah, Louis, Louis! my man, my big, fierce man! didn't you know it was you? No king, Louis; you, you!"

The King swung about and dropped his face into his hands. The muscles

of it twitched and played strange tricks.

"Let me think," he said; "give me a moment to think."

The world outside the gold bars smiled and beckoned. Sunshine, the odor of roses, Spring winds over the grass wakening the blood in the veins, and freedom, freedom! Great God, what freedom means to a caged soul!

Varvara's breath was on his cheeks. He felt the throb of her heart fast and strong against his arm. The smell of her hair was in his nostrils. The lift of her breathing, the perfume of her, the sway of her passion touched his blood, mounted to his head.

"Listen!" he said, swiftly. "There's a train leaves Freistadt, northbound, at 2.17 in the morning. It stops, on signal, at the Schloss private station down beyond the gardens half an hour later. Go home in an hour or so. The ball won't be over till three o'clock. Leave word for the Count that you aren't well; he'll stay till the end. Then meet me at the inner gate of the Italian garden, back of the Neptune fountains, at two o'clock. If anything turns up to keep me I'll send you word. Otherwise I will be there promptly at two. Bring a bag, but no servant, no maid."

He drew a long breath as one who has taken his plunge. His hands clasped and unclasped nervously.

"Uriah will have to stand it as best he can," he said, lightly. "As for me, I think no one will die of grief. My heaven! to be free—free! Charles will make a few philosophic remarks. Charles fancies himself at philosophy. The Chamber will meet and take solemn action. The papers will gloat—for a week. Elena will—Elena will—Elena——"

He broke off, frowning. "It's a damned low trick on Elena!" he said, slowly, as if to himself.

The Countess laughed shortly.

"Ah, the Queen will cry her eyes out," she said, with some asperity. "She adores you. I watched you dancing with her to-night. Good Lord, one might as well dance with

a dummy! She's an iceberg—a mediæval graystone saint—a—a——”

“I think,” said the King, gently, “that we will leave the Queen out of it, if you don't mind, Varvara. She—she is the Queen, you know. Perhaps we haven't been quite ideal lovers. Perhaps it's been my fault. Perhaps—well, she will reign wisely. It's a damned low trick on Elena!” he concluded, slowly, as if to himself.

The Countess stirred uneasily in her seat and murmured something unintelligible. She felt that she had made a false step, had struck a wrong note.

Then one of the gentlemen-in-waiting appeared from the ballroom, making a discreet amount of noise as he approached.

“The Queen is asking for your Majesty,” he said.

The King rose at once. “Two o'clock,” he whispered, adding, aloud: “Von Altdorf, I must leave the Countess zu Ehrenstern in your care. I am treating you, on the whole, better than you deserve.”

The Countess curtsied, and Von Altdorf bowed abjectly.

At the door of the royal private apartments the King and Queen dismissed their ladies- and gentlemen-in-waiting.

“Go back and amuse yourselves, *mes souris*,” said his Majesty. “The cats are tactfully out of hearing. Night, Elena,” he said at the Queen's suite. “Sweet dreams, though you won't have them after that *langouste mayonnaise*.”

The Queen gave him her hand, and a little tired smile that followed him to his own rooms and stayed unpleasantly in his mind, while he packed a Gladstone bag and transacted certain business with a combination American safe built into the wall of his study.

He stood over the filled bag before closing it, and wondered how many indispensable articles had been omitted. He was unaccustomed to packing his own luggage.

“A flask,” he said—“now where

the deuce is that silver filigree flask the Emperor gave me? I believe Elena has it.”

He went out of the room and down the little passage that led to the Queen's chambers.

The door of her dressing-room stood open, there being no fear of intrusion, and let a bar of light out across the red carpet of the corridor.

He hesitated a moment, then looked in, diffidently. The Queen was entirely alone. She had been taking off the many jewels she had worn at the ball and laying them in a silver jewel casket that stood open on the table by her side. She was better without them. People said she was the most beautiful woman in the royal circles of Europe, not excepting the three Orléans sisters. She wore a close-fitting gown of white covered with silver and pearl embroidery. It clung to her gorgeous figure tenderly, making every perfection evident without vulgarizing it. Her head, with its crown of black hair, its sombre, perfect beauty, is as familiar in every corner of the world through the public prints and photographs as was that of the martyred Empress of Austria. Indeed, their types are strangely alike, as everyone knows.

Out in the corridor the King stirred uneasily, and wavered between entering and stealing back unseen to his own rooms. He felt rather like an eavesdropper, a Peeping Tom.

The Queen sang under her breath a snatch of song, a sad little, quaint little nursery ballad of old France. She looked tired, infinitely—not physically tired merely, but sad, unhappy.

To the King out in the corridor it came all at once how wonderfully, unspeakably beautiful his wife was, and how hopelessly apart they had lived during their two years of marriage. It came to him that she might have been lonely all this time, that her coldness, her aloofness, might have been cloaking a sad heart and an empty life.

“Ah, well,” sighed the King, “I haven't been quite hilarious myself, but thank God it's over with. To

morrow life begins," and he knocked at the open door and entered.

"Looking for a flask, Elena," he apologized—"a silver-and-glass flask. It occurred to me that you borrowed it a week or so ago. Happen to have it in sight? Don't bother, you know."

The Queen looked about the room, on the tables and in some drawers.

"I remember very well borrowing it, Louis," she said, "and I'm sure it's about, but heaven knows where. Wait a moment—I'll call a maid."

"No, don't," said the King; "it isn't of any consequence, really. I must have a dozen of them about. I'll look one up."

He fingered the blazing diamonds in the jewel case absently.

"Did you—did you have a pleasant evening with the—Countess?" asked the Queen.

His Majesty looked up in surprise. There was a distinct bitterness in the tone. He had not believed that she cared enough to be bitter or even piqued.

"Oh, yes," he said, indifferently. "The Countess is a woman of some wit. She's a tongue in her head, really. Well—good-night. Never mind about the flask."

The Queen threw up a hand and turned her head. "Wait," she cried, softly. "Listen." The music from the ballroom below and in the far wing of the Schloss came up through the night, made very faint and sweet by distance.

"*Fleurs de l'Amour*," breathed the Queen, with closed eyes and a little, tender smile at her lips, and a rosy, faltering blush of girlhood spreading upward. "'*Fleurs de l'Amour*!' Ah, Louis, do you remember?—they played it that evening at Homburg when you—you asked me to be a queen. It was a cold business, Louis, wasn't it?—and there haven't been many *fleurs de l'amour* in our lives. But a girl doesn't forget her proposals. Ah, well, good-night, Louis; sleep well."

She turned away wearily and sank into the big stuffed chair by the table. But the King lingered, still touching

the diamonds and sapphires in the jewel box.

Then suddenly he pushed over a little footstool to the side of the chair and dropped upon it. He twice opened his mouth to speak, and twice hesitated. Then all at once: "How beautiful you are, Elena!" he said, simply; "how wonderfully beautiful you are!" And the Queen turned suddenly crimson and hid her face.

"No," he went on, presently, "we haven't made a good thing of it, have we? We haven't seemed to hit it off at all. I wonder—I wonder if we've ever tried. It was—as you say—a cold business, from the first. One doesn't often marry for love in our rank, but I wonder—I wonder if we've ever really tried. Whose fault is it? I suppose we each would promptly confess to it." He laughed a little, mirthlessly. "But each would be thinking all the time that it is really the fault of the other."

He took one of her hands in both of his and stroked it thoughtfully. The touch of it gave him a curious, unexpected thrill. He looked up swiftly, with puzzled eyes.

"Am I crazy to-night?" he demanded of himself, scornfully. But the thrill refused to depart.

The Queen turned her face to him again, and the hand in his clasp stirred a little, tremulously.

"Fault?" she said, slowly. "I don't know, Louis. I honestly don't know. I suppose you thought I was hopelessly cold and unfeeling and aloof, and I suppose I thought you were hopelessly taken up with—with your other friends—countesses and the like—don't be angry, Louis—and hadn't time to give a thought to me—weren't you, Louis, weren't you? And then, too, my friend, there's something else, something that is hard for a man to realize, of course—the shock, the outraged sensibilities of a young girl thrown into a loveless marriage. You can't figure to yourself how such a girl feels, Louis; you mustn't blame her if she draws back into her shell in an agony of humiliation, of bitterness, of shame."

She turned about in the chair and leaned close over him, where he sat at her feet, and gave her other hand to his clasp. A wave of black hair, loosened when she had taken off her tiara, slipped down and fell across his face.

The thrill within him became a storm that shook him bodily, a vertigo that whirled the room before his eyes.

"Oh, man, man!" he groaned, inwardly, "*are* you mad? Why, man, fool, your bag is all packed in that room yonder, to run away with another woman to Paris; to freedom, man!—blessed, blessed, careless freedom, and with a woman who loves you!"

But all at once the blessed freedom seemed to him undesirable, rather silly. It came to him that he would be homesick after a little, sick for the Court, for the shooting in the Winter, for his friendly quarrels with Charles. He thought of the slant Tartar eyes and wicked mouth of the Countess zu Ehrenstern. Then he ventured a look upward into the beautiful face above him. His very flesh crept as if he had offered a shameful insult to the Queen in thinking of a comparison.

The filmy lace of the curtains at the open window swayed and wavered inward with the cool night breeze from the gardens, and on the breeze came again, faint and sweet, the old refrain from the ballroom:

Faith that liveth forever,
Rose, my rose, of love,
Hearts that will sever never,
Flowers, ah—

"I suppose you are right," said the King. "I suppose I never considered that part of it, never made allowance for what you might be feeling. It was such a matter of business! How should I understand, anyhow? You see, Elena, I've never loved anyone." Then, inwardly, "Great heaven! what is the matter with me? I want to kiss her hands! She'd die of the shock. *What* is the matter with me?"

"Never loved anyone?" she said. "Do you think I am a child, Louis? Do you think that the things you do

never reach my ears? Don't let us be absurd!"

"By all the saints, it's the truth!" he cried, standing over her. "I've never lied to you—and—and—whatever they may say," he went on, more diffidently, "I've never wronged you, either. On my soul, I've never loved any woman! Oh, of course, I don't mean that I've—I've never—well, I'm a human being—that I've never felt any sort of an emotion for my—my countesses, as you delicately put it just now, but bless you, I'd have felt the same interest in their maids if they had happened to be good-looking enough. If only one hadn't an absurd prejudice in favor of one's own class!"

He walked up and down the room with his hands clasped behind him and his brows lowering.

"I'm not well," he said to himself. "I've a strange desire to do all sorts of absurd things. My mind is weakening."

He dropped again to the little footstool at the Queen's feet and took her hands in his.

He wanted to tell her that he felt a curious trembling weakness coming on, and that he must be off to bed, but he looked into her face with a certain childlike wonder, a dawning surprise, and said only, "What wonderful eyes you have, Elena! what wonderful eyes!"

The eyes hid themselves swiftly, but the King found himself holding her two hands to his cheek. He realized his actions very dimly in the midst of the fever, the strange madness, the breaking up of heaven and earth that surged in him and would not be mastered.

"Tell me," he said, unsteadily, "have you ever loved anyone, Elena?"

"Yes!" cried the Queen, "great God, yes!" and she drew away from him and rose and stood at some little distance, hiding her face in her hands.

The fever and storm and whirl of things dropped away from him like a garment. He laid his throbbing head against the arm of the chair that she

had quitted. He did not know that his lips clung to the flowered silk, warm where her arm had lain.

"She loves someone else," he said to himself, very slowly, that he might realize what the fact meant to him. "She loves someone else, and she's sorry for me. She doesn't want to cause me pain. Now *I've* tried to save *her* pain in the last two years, haven't I? Ah, you brute, you low brute! She's the only thing in all the green earth, and I've thrown her away, thrown her away deliberately, for—countesses!"

The Tartar eyes and wicked mouth of Varvara zu Ehrenstern came before him again, and he shivered from head to foot.

"Dearest, dearest!" he breathed, softly, with his cheek against the flowered silk of the big chair, "I've been mad—blind—possessed of devils, but how I love you—how I must love you all my life long!"

A little sob from the woman across the room brought him to his feet.

"Then," said the King, very sadly, "I have lost you, as God knows I deserve. Be a little sorry for me, Elena, for, by my soul and body I love you so that I think I must die of my love!" and he dropped on one knee and kissed the hem of her skirt.

Then, when he would have left her, the Queen turned a white face to him.

"Oh, are you blind, Louis?" she breathed.



WHO CARES?

THE warm Wind kisses the Rose of May.
 She turns not away, nor says him nay;
 For buds will blow and winds must go.
 If he comes not back, who'll know, who'll know
 That she's lain caressed on the Wind's warm breast?
 If he dares, who cares?

The bold Wave kisses the Lily's mouth,
 Though she knows he is fleeing away to the South.
 For buds will blow and streams must flow.
 He will ne'er come back. Who'll know, who'll know
 That she lay so fair on his bosom bare?
 If he dares, who cares?

My love he kisses me while he may.
 I turn not away, nor say him nay;
 For lips will glow, and my love must go
 As the Wind and Wave. Who'll know, who'll know
 That I reeled with bliss 'neath my love's warm kiss?
 If he dares, who cares?

HATTIE HORNER-LOUTHAN.



ACCOUNTED FOR

SHE—Those two people in the far corner appear happy. Are they married?
 HE—Yes, but not to each other.

THE GOSPEL OF GOLD

By Edgar Saltus

MONEY was recently tight—a very vulgar condition for it to be in, by the way, yet whether tight or loose, there is really nothing more fascinating. Though you haven't any, there is no law to prevent you from fancying that you are opulent, and, imagination aiding, you are afloat in seas of delight, on a steam yacht at that, surrounded by a picked corps of *demi-vierges* solely occupied in discovering the secret of your ceaseless ennui.

What more can the heart desire? The dream of it is even fairer than realization could be. *Demi-vierges* have their limitations, so, too, have steam yachts. The raptures of seas of delight, when prolonged, make you yawn the top of your head off. From which it follows, or seems to follow, that it is better to be indigent and imaginative than plutocratic and perverse. Even so, and even otherwise, the potentialities of plutocracy will suffer no diminution from the showing. A writer whose name we forget, and which, were we to remember, we should probably misspell, told, in the childhood of history, about a race of dwarfs who passed their lives fighting for gold with griffins in the dark. He told, too, or if he did not someone else did, about another set of people who lived on the scent of the rose. All this picturesqueness occurred a long time ago, and it may be never occurred at all. But an analogy subsists. We never enter the Street without encountering those dwarfs. We never withdraw into our *tour d'ivoire* that the rose-breathers are not there to greet us.

Personally, we prefer the latter.

They receive us with open alms. The delicacy of the largess is very inspiring. It entrances, evokes and does not exhaust. It takes you up through enchanted gardens and sets you down in a world beautiful, ornate, unutilitarian; a world that in lieu of hypocrisy and cant offers mysteries and myths, yet a world in which there are gullies of gold, gullies, too, of gore. For even in delicate largess these things are condimental. They form the sauce that we think we have heard described as piquant, the dash of red pepper without which even the truffle is trite.

The flavor aiding, you may pass with Paris on his scarlet prow over the green plain of waters, straight to the gates of Ilium, and within see how each man stood and mused at Helen's face, war in the war of the world that was waged for her, watch the topless towers burn, and then, if you like, after beholding the gore behold the gold—the blinding apparition that archæology unearthed, the richest treasure that Death ever amassed, the unimagined splendor of the King of Kings.

Sights such as these any decent *tour d'ivoire* will provide. By way of accompaniment to the visions there is, or should be, a hum of harps swooning in a crash of brass, a finale and prelude in one. Then, as the drama faints back into silence, there should follow the whisper of waters, the lap of waves, the muffled voice of a river which, winding from hill to sea, is pierced suddenly by a note very high, very clear, entirely limpid, a note that has in it the gaiety of a sunbeam, a note that mounts in loops

of light, expanding as it mounts, transcending the sound of the waters, raining accords on the ripples, until, bursting into jets and fanfares, it drowns the voice of the river, shakes stars in your ears, sends a shiver down your spine and in cascades of harmony propels from the stream's deepest depth the sonority and glare of the *Rheingold*.

Follow that glare and the glitter of it backward and forward out of myth and into the market, and you will find that always and ever it has dazzled the eyes of man. Just why this should be we haven't an idea, unless, indeed, as someone somewhere surreptitiously surmised, it is because, given enough of the substance and you are qualified to tell anybody to go to hell. It may be objected that such telling, while obviously convenient, is not at all polite. Politeness, however, has been relegated to the department stores. Floor-walkers are models of perfect deportment. But elsewhere it is good form to be rude. In the smart set the best manner consists in having none, and how can that absence of manner be better enhanced than by airs of profound contempt? Such airs are not perhaps endearing; moreover, so many people there are who really deserve them that they should not be wastefully dispensed. Yet if you are rich enough you can readily be extravagant. You may cast them on the waters—they are not well bred, and you can be indifferent to their return.

How much it takes to do this becomingly depends on where one is. In New York, with a penny less than ten million you are pinched. The wolf is not at the door merely, he is in the drawing-room. You can't even afford to be entertained. In circumstances so straitened any airs would be sheer presumption. But in London, where life is more solemn, and bad taste less ornate, a million will suffice. It is rumored that there are bankrupts who have rioted on less. Yet this, possibly, was in the good old days. In any event, those days are gone. For that matter, the million-days are going, too. A decennium hence and a

million in Mayfair will represent what similar small change does here—a form of poverty that, while shabby, is not genteel.

In the good old days to which we have referred, and particularly in the bad young days that preceded them, things were different. Civilization was tolerably out at elbows. Pluto was known in the schools, but the plutocrat had not appeared in the streets. He had not even appeared in the dictionary. The evolution and the domestication of the animal have occurred within the last fifty years. We forget the amount that Dumas gave *Monte Cristo*, and it is too much bother to look it up. Yet however stunning the sum total may have seemed at the time, it would be the devil's own job to make both ends meet on it now. Any one of our self-respecting plutocrats could write it off and never know the difference.

We lack a list of these people, otherwise we should produce it. We lack, too, those statistics of wealth which prudent essayists first crib, then pigeonhole and finally hand out as their own. Otherwise we should do the same. What we can assert is that fifty years ago there were but two millionaires among us. To-day they are common as lords on Pall Mall. Personally we have not over a hundred or so on our visiting list, and half of these we do not know by sight. Yet if we may believe everything we read—and writing as we do, we are rather disinclined to—by actual count their number now exceeds ten thousand. Assuming, for the fun of it, that the figures are correct, then, should the multiplication of the breed continue in the same rabbit progression, one of two things is certain—either they will overrun us entirely or else we shall all be millionaires.

And why not? It does not require an inordinate intellect to be rich. On the contrary. All one has to do is to stand in the way. Somewhere near Sardis there was a stream. Its properties were such that those who bathed in it were enabled to turn whatever they touched into gold. That stream

has been diverted from Sardis to the Street. Bathing there is variously conducted. You may plunge or you may dabble. But the ensuing transmutation differs only in degree. Touch a block of five thousand A. O. T. common, and while, all things being relative, it may precipitate more dust than a hundred preferred, yet such is the beauty of the chemistry of the bath that in either case the residuum is coin. We used to think that spook séances and spirit manifestations were nursery tricks beside the thaumaturgy with which a prestidigitator of the pen could turn a wad of foolscap and a bottle of ink into a bank account, but that sorcery, however surprising, is stupid beside the celerity with which any old thing can be resolved from a tip into cash.

The Gospel of Gold is, then, quite simple. It has a defect, however—it is yet unwritten. When it does appear, if it ever should, *Aie de quoi et Dieu l'aidera* will be its obvious motto. Therein are all the law and some of the profits. *Quoi*, of course, stands for coin. The rest of the apothegm, diversely expounded by scholiasts, the higher criticism construes into an invitation to make haste, not so much perhaps while the sun shines as when the bull does. Last month the hide of the brute was a golden fleece. The month before the sheen of it coruscated. The month previous every hair emitted sparks. Next month it may be more brilliant than ever. The month after there may be no looking at it at all. For a year, for a year and a day, perhaps for a year and a half, round the ring that bull will gyrate, illuminating in his *écarts* everything he meets. Then suddenly the great *espada*, whose name is Time, with one swift thrust will transfix him. Such is the fate of bulls.

Such at least has been their fate at every function that the last century has witnessed. The *corridas* of the Street don't differ much from those of Spain. In each case the spectacle is the same. It is the climax that varies. There the ring is swept by a supe,

here it is struck by a crisis. The orbit of that crisis the astrologists of political economy figure at about ten years. The oscillation of its forces is as calculable and as inevitable as a comet's return. Between depression and prosperity the pendulum swings. In the financial history of financial nations fat years are followed by lean, and lean by fat. We are having our fat now. It is not yet in the fire, but just as surely as two and two make four it will get there. The moment markets become unable to absorb further produce, money proceeds to get tight, there is a rush to unload, a precipitate drop, and before you can get from under, the *espada* appears, the bull is dead, and the lights are extinguished.

These phenomena, which, with a regularity that we cannot but admire, have decennially spaced a century, will presumably recur a twelvemonth hence. They may come a little earlier or a little later, but they can no more desert the heavens of political economy than stars can deviate from their course. If now these premises are accepted it follows that the epigraph on the unwritten gospel has its weight. Assuming its observance, assuming that haste has been made while the bull, though ragged, perhaps, was still in the ring, what is to be done with the profits?

Mr. Carnegie not long since recommended their immediate distribution. He recommended that the masses be supplied with libraries, galleries, churches and parks. The pseudo-benevolence of the idea is revolting. The masses don't want these things. They care nothing for parks that don't provide, for art that doesn't appeal, for books that only bewilder, or for churches that no longer console. What they want is not soft solder, but socialism. In default of the latter, then, if only for the pleasurable emotions that the circus provides, they want the spectacle of rich men living richly.

The desire is entirely righteous. It is one that deserves to be fostered. The splendor of billionaires should be

manifest in successions of fastidious festivals, in Heliogabalian luxury, in super-Neronian magnificence and in Vesuvii of coin. The press may rail and the pulpit fulminate. Yet what if they do? It is only through general gorgeousness, ceaseless extravagance, unreckoning lavishness and royal profusion that man can in any way approach the ideal which Nature, in her divine prodigalities, herself has set. But our plutocrats don't look at it in that light. The day is not distant when the giving of automobiles and grand pianos by way of cotillon favors will satisfy, and amply, their conceptions of what's what. Meanwhile, we are quite convinced that they have plenty of taste, but from samples exhibited we are quite convinced, too, that it is all very bad.

A condition of things such as this cries, if not to heaven, at least to us all. It is a matter that narrowly escapes being personal. Many of us are, it is true, no better off than the law allows. But what of it? Though we live on a hundred dollars a day we can always dream of a billion. Then, too, in a land so full of surprises as this is, nobody—except a few mediums like Mrs. Piper and a few astrologers like ourselves—nobody can tell what spoiled old men of Fortune the poorest of us may yet become. Hence, therefore, to the pilgrim as well as to the plutocrat the need of a Gospel of Gold.

Without seeming to know more than we do, we can safely affirm

that one of these days such an evangel will appear. Its production, however, will not be easy. It will require the quadruple collaboration of a profound philosopher, an inspired composer, a thorough mathematician and an impeccable poet. Could Plato, Wagner, Euclid and Hugo call to one another across the centuries, they would be the ones for the job.

From their combined banquets, scores, logarithms and verses the precepts evolved might lead even Mr. Carnegie from the error of his ways. Failing that—for some things are impossible—the generated maxims would form a manual that ought to prove highly serviceable in the education of billionaires-to-be. It would be a code for the plunger and the plutocrat. It would teach how to get riches and how to get rid of them. It would set forth the rites of the inimitable life, the secrets of triumphant death. It would explain the subtle science of splendor and the more difficult art of entertaining people you never saw before. It would show dwarfs how to fight, bring fresh dreams to rose-breathers, outsell the stupidest novel, fill a long-felt want, and be a very handy book to have about the house.

There is but one thing it could not do, and that is, supply brains to those who have none. But it would be a holy writ, the annotation of a psalm that the whole nation is singing, a pæan in praise of the greatness and glory of the god that is Gold.



CELESTIAL COMMERCE

COMMUNICATION with the stars
Is now anticipated,
With Venus, Jupiter and Mars,
So scientists have stated.

Free trading won't be far behind;
In time we'll choose a pattern,
And looking at the back we'll find
It labeled, "Made in Saturn."

AT THE SIGN OF THE CLEFT HEART

By Theodosia Garrison

TIME—*afternoon. The season—May.*
The scene—*Love's Shop, Arcadian Way;*
Love at the counter; Maiden at the door.

MAIDEN

Is this the place?—I've not—been here—before——

LOVE (*aside*)

Ah, a new customer—I know the blush—
Poor child! She's all a-quiver as a thrush
Thrills before singing. (*Bowing*) Sweetheart, from your face
I can assure you that this *is* the place,
The Sign of the Cleft Heart. Hearts, old and new,
Always in stock; repairing done here, too.
Exchanges made and offered——

MAIDEN

Nay, sir, I

Have only come——

LOVE (*aside*)

That blush again!

MAIDEN

—to buy.

LOVE

Good! Look about you. Here are hearts a score—
Choose any one——

MAIDEN

Think you I wanted more?
One's almost too expensive. Mother prayed——

LOVE (*aside*)

Venus! these mothers—how they help the trade!

MAIDEN

—Prayed me—to—be content a year or two
With none—or let her choose for me.

LOVE

Yet you——

THE SMART SET

MAIDEN

I came alone, because I thought that she—
That I—in fact, our tastes might not agree.

LOVE

Quite so. In fact, when ancient ladies call
I often find their tastes the worst of all;
And yet they're suited easily, but you—
You youngsters puzzle me. (*Picking up a heart*) Will this one do?

MAIDEN (*reflecting*)

Um! yes; it's large, but then it seems so green.

LOVE

Yes, it is fresh, but then it's just nineteen
And full of poetry. Why, it could speak
An hour about the dimples in your cheek.
And then how pure it is!—no spot, no stain—

MAIDEN

Uninteresting! Put it back again.

LOVE (*aside*)

So *that* to girlhood is what boy love means!
I'll put this by for someone beyond—teens.
Well, look at this one.

MAIDEN

Oh, but that's so small!

LOVE

And yet so heavy. Quick, don't let it fall!

MAIDEN

So small, yet heavy that I scarce can hold—

LOVE

It's brimmed quite to the very top with gold.
No romance left; no touch of hope or fire,
But hard, bright gold.

MAIDEN

It's not what I desire,
The horrid, heavy thing, yet—

LOVE

Be confessed.

MAIDEN

I think mamma would have me like it best.

LOVE

It's not for sale; it's left for an exchange.

MAIDEN

For what?

LOVE

A tender, maiden heart.

MAIDEN

How strange!

LOVE

Not strange at all—exchange of pounds and pence
For youth and purity and innocence.
The thing's done every day.

MAIDEN

But you—but *you*—?

LOVE

Not strictly in my line, you mean. Quite true—
A side branch of the trade, not really mine;
It only bears my signature and sign,
And they wear off. But see, will this one do?

MAIDEN

Why, Love, how *can* you? Look, it's broken through!

LOVE

Of course, of course; yet, if you really cared
To have the thing, it's easily repaired,
And no one's wiser. Treat it thus and so
And in a month the crack will scarcely show.

MAIDEN

But still I'd know it.

LOVE

True, but think what wit
And cleverness you'd show in mending it!

MAIDEN

Well, I'll consider that; but this one, see!
So nicked and cracked—

LOVE

Oh, handle carefully!
It's fragile, but in good condition.

MAIDEN

True,
Yet I prefer the one that's broken through
To this one, with its horrid, hundred cracks.

LOVE (*aside*)

There spake the woman! This one, then; this lacks
Nothing to make it what you most desire.
A perfect article, complete, entire.

THE SMART SET

MAIDEN

But it looks shopworn.

LOVE

Well, the fact appears
It's been for sale for something like ten years.

MAIDEN

Ugh! No, a thing like that would never do.
I want a heart—that—others covet, too.
Now let me see—is not this one——

LOVE

That's black
In certain lights, and damaged. Put it back;
It's not the thing you're looking for at all.
Now this one——

MAIDEN

That's too cold.

LOVE

And this?

MAIDEN

Too small.

LOVE

Well, really, I have nothing else to show.
You might stop in to-morrow, say——

MAIDEN

Oh! oh!

Look there!

LOVE

Look where?

MAIDEN

Why, there, upon the shelf!
The very thing—I'll take it down myself——
Indeed, the nicest one you have in store!

LOVE

That's not for sale.

MAIDEN

Oh, get it, I implore!
I'll give you anything you ask—and more.

LOVE

It's not for sale. I'm storing it, that's all,
Until that day a certain maid shall call
And claim it.

MAIDEN

Was't not I?

LOVE

No, no, my dear,
The owner's last instructions were too clear.

MAIDEN

Alas, what were they?

LOVE

"Take this heart," he said,
"And put it by with hearts uncomforted.
Show it to none, until a maid one day
Comes searching for a heart she threw away.
Then take this down, and if it be the same,
Across and through it will be writ her name."

MAIDEN

Alas, what more?

LOVE

He said, "Her eyes are blue——"

MAIDEN

And mine are brown—but would not brown eyes do?

LOVE

He said, "Her hair is golden as the track
Of sunshine on the sea."

MAIDEN

And mine is black!
But she has never come?

LOVE

Not yet.

MAIDEN

Then oh,
Give me the heart! I want it, want it so!
Dear Love, give me the heart.

LOVE

I should not dare.

MAIDEN

She has forgotten it—she would not care.
Give it to me——

LOVE

It is not meant for you.
Here are so many others—won't they do?
Take two or three——

MAIDEN

I only want that one!

THE SMART SET

LOVE

Really, I'm sorry, but it can't be done.

MAIDEN (*in tears*)

Please, Love, oh, please, oh, cruel——

LOVE

No—no—no!

MAIDEN

You horrid, horrid, cruel thing! I'll go
Straight home and tell my mother. What is more,
I'll *have* that one!

LOVE (*solus*)

Whew! How she slammed the door!
And how she begged! Poor child, she'll know some day
The tricks Love plays to make the business pay.
Why, bless me, look at this—a happy find!
Poor little soul, she's left her heart behind
Instead of taking one away. Dear, dear!
Give me the steps and let me store it here
Close by the other—so, beneath the rose—
And when she comes to-morrow—well, who knows?



SO WAGS THE WORLD

MADGE—I had a most delightful time at the piano recital this afternoon.
MARJORIE—How lucky you are to have a father who can give you
money all the time for tickets. The overture must have been beautiful.

MADGE—I don't quite recollect, but the pianist's hair was just lovely.
He must spend more time on it than on his practicing.

MARJORIE—How was the sonata?

MADGE—I guess that was all right, but I was in dreamland all the time,
for I knew mine was the prettiest gown in the whole audience.

MARJORIE—Do you honestly think, my dear, that you derived any real
benefit from the recital?

MADGE—I'm sure of it, love. All the music in my nature seemed to be
aroused by the young artist's skilful rendition, and the moment I arrived
home I sat down to my piano and played a whole lot of those lovely ragtime
coon melodies.



MEAGRE MATERIAL

EDITOR—Why don't you write something about bathing suits?
JOKER—Nothing much to write about.

IN A LONDON SEASON

By Edgar Fawcett

THEY had taken a small house in Upper Grosvenor street for the season, and now it was the middle of June. London had never been gayer. Two European royalties had come to visit Queen Victoria, and hence the Drawing Rooms had proved specially brilliant, and many of the private balls as well. Never was there more jollity at the clubs in St. James's street and Pall Mall; never were there more luxurious dinners in Park Lane and the big patrician squares. Through the soft nights and the opaline pallor of the early dawns cabs dashed through Mayfair and Belgravia, bearing young men with glassy eyes and tousled white neckties—bearing other human freight not seldom, on whom the stains of revel were still more ruefully stamped.

Mrs. Dennistoun's small house in Upper Grosvenor street had been very expensive, and the gowns, the brougham, the landau, the hire of servants, the festal profferings, had all proved costly addenda. Just after the Ascot races, at which the wonderful beauty of her niece, abetted by certain specially choice habiliments, had set the society journals in raptures, Mrs. Dennistoun began to lose something of her brave and serene bearing. In public she still preserved a smiling front; but the girl who was her constant companion saw the change with silent apprehension.

"We *must* stay here till the first of August," Mrs. Dennistoun said, one morning at breakfast, when she and her young kinswoman were alone together; "but really, Rosamond, I'm getting horribly into debt. There's

no use feigning and falsifying any longer. I'm sorry we ever left Lynwood, now." The speaker pursed her lips and drearily shook her head, on which the blanched hair was modishly coiled and twisted. "And you, perhaps, can't but feel a sense of triumph at my remorse."

Lady Rosamond Garthe looked plaintively reproachful. "Triumph, Aunt Meta? That isn't like me. Come, now, grant it."

"I do, I do, Rose." Mrs. Dennistoun's eyes moistened behind their glasses, and tremors crept into her sharp, faded chin. "But you did so want to stay on at dull old Lynwood! You wanted it because Ashburnham Leigh was there. Ah, don't deny it!"

"I haven't denied it," said her niece, with voice lowered, yet firm, "and I shall not now. But there were other reasons, aunt. I knew you conceived the idea that a few weeks of all this hollow pomp would make me forget Ashburnham. I hated that you should drag big sums out of your income to effect an alienation impossible for both of us. Since I was eighteen Ashburnham and I have been in love with each other. How often have I told you that I should never marry anyone else? How often has *he* told you of his fixed fidelity? He is only a poor painter—and with little real talent—or so he's modest enough to maintain." Here Lady Rosamond left her place at table, having finished her breakfast, and began to roam vaguely about the room. "You *should* have seen it all, aunt," she went on, pausing at Mrs. Dennistoun's side. "None of these new

men interests me. I am always thinking of *him*. I am always thinking about the chance of our marriage. When he passed through London recently on his way southward, and brought with him good news concerning his lawsuit, I was tempted to tell you I would go nowhere if he, too, could not be given a card."

"Oh, he got his cards quickly enough. If I didn't supply them some of his aunts or cousins did. He's a poor artist—poor in more senses than one, I think—and lives down in the country. But he's Ashburnham Leigh, notwithstanding, and everybody realizes it, and there you two were, going about to places with your heads together and no eyes for any living mortal except yourselves. Of course it was horribly dispiriting for the men who've made up to you, Rosamond. I saw the Marquis of Roscommon frown with rage when you gave some question of his a monosyllable and went along tugging devotedly at Ashburnham's arm through Lady Laddismere's great crush. And as for Stayne Dolmar, you treated him, at Mrs. Doneraile's musical, as if he were a waiter poking an ice at you that you didn't want."

Lady Rosamond recoiled a little, while she raised one protesting hand. "Stayne Dolmar, aunt! He's too odious to think of!"

Mrs. Dennistoun gave several quick, short nods. She had been fiercely irritated for days past; still, she detested losing her temper, as if it were some precious family heirloom. She had always been a woman of kind heart and high principles. But ever since her niece, a penniless little orphan, daughter of an impoverished peer whose title had gone to a rather distant cousin, had come to dwell with her at Lynwood, an ambition of strengthening ardor had possessed her. She cared nothing for the smart world herself; she had seen it all years ago. She was quite content to meet the end of her widowed days in her pretty and commodious Norfolkshire home. But Rosamond! ah, that was a different affair. Such a girl

was meant for a great marriage. As time passed on the amazing beauty of her niece became a perpetual spur and challenge. She must be taken up to London; they would see her there and fall at her feet. One doesn't put a tea rose into an earthen jug; yet what else could this Ashburnham Leigh hope to do? Admitting that a real passion existed between the pair, circumstance could dissipate it, on the side of the girl. She was wrought to be a duchess, or at least the wife of some conspicuous millionaire. Her father had been the twelfth Earl of Dundagil, and she, though dowerless, had a face and form that elicited literal wonder from observers.

"She must go! she must go!" Mrs. Dennistoun had mused again and again. "If I bankrupt myself she will pay me back, set me straight again—*afterward*." Her will had finally prevailed, and now she felt that she had indeed bankrupted herself. And for what? To find that her Rosamond had remained marble to the admiration and adoration poured upon her by her many suitors. Half the picture shops of London had flaunted her photographs in their windows. Famous portrait painters had begged the privilege of copying on canvas her angelic face. She was above the jealousy of women; they bowed before her loveliness as before a divine right. One of the handsomest *grandes dames* in England had whispered to her, "You make me hate to look in my looking-glass." She had refused the conceited but clever young Duke of Benvoirloch, who had already fled to Homburg in wrath, and as well all the others, lower in rank but richer, some of them, than even the infuriated Duke.

It was hard, savagely hard, and Mrs. Dennistoun, who had been for a good while thinking it so with well-drilled nerves and a collected outer deportment, now unleashed the dogs of war. She trembled in her chair as she next spoke, and her wan cheeks were in dismal accordance with the husky staccato of her tones.

"Too odious to think of, eh? I

believe he's the last you have left, now. You've alienated everybody but him. Oh, he's vulgar, perhaps, but he goes to Court, and the Prince and the Princess both beam on him. He's a beefy, florid creature, if you please, and sometimes he drops an h when he isn't very careful. But tell me the girl who wouldn't be his wife if he asked her! You wouldn't? You're quite alone, however. He worships you. As Lady Rosamond Dolmar you would have command of actually monstrous wealth. Some folk say that he's worth ten millions of pounds—including his South African mining shares and his Brazilian diamond mines. This may not be true; but no man with the faintest knowledge of financial matters will deny that he has four million pounds under his thumb. And you prate about Ashburnham Leigh's lawsuit! His claim to those Devonshire lands and moneys may be just enough, and his lawyer friend, Condovery, out of pure friendship may be pushing it all he can. But he'll never get there—never! The Langley-Leighs are too strong for him, and there's that fatal flaw—the alleged, if unproved, illegitimacy of his great-grandfather, Dynevor Leigh. You can't say, Rosamond, that I've acted except for your good. You won't marry Ashburnham as he is, nor does he desire it, seeing the folly of such a marriage. Every penny of my dower estate, Lynwood, goes at my death to the Leicestershire Dennistouns; you have known that for an age. I've only the life income, and this I've been frightfully over-spending. You have been the apple of my eye, Rosamond, and now you've turned out a curse to me!"

Never had the girl seen her aunt so angered. She stared at Mrs. Dennistoun with hands tight clasped, her luminous gaze a tragedy of regret. Suddenly she hurried to the side of her interlocutress, and sought to take her hand. But she was almost flung away. Mrs. Dennistoun rose and tossed the glasses from her eyes. Flurriedly she sought a corner of the mantel, and there, with her brow

leaning against it, gave way to her emotions.

"A curse to you?" faltered Lady Rosamond. "How can you speak so heartless a sentence?"

Mrs. Dennistoun swept round, facing her. The girl looked so spiritually beautiful in her sorrow that for a second her companion felt abashed, even awed. But more bitter words found vent.

"You are fearfully ungrateful. You may live yet to repent the superb chances you have cast away. What does Ashburnham love you for? Your beauty—nothing else. It's maddened him, as it maddens half the men you meet. But wait till it fades. It *will* fade! Your mother was handsome when young; at thirty the change came. Ashburnham is fine looking, strong and athletic; with his birth and name he can marry an heiress any time between now and forty. Will *you* be like this at forty? What is your future? I shall have died, most probably—none of us L'Estranges live to be very old—and have left you the merest pittance. You'll be driven to marrying some inane curate or a captain on half-pay, or a City man from the Stock Exchange who hungers for a titled spouse."

Lady Rosamond bit her lips; into the deeps of her sweet eyes pain had entered, and rebellion as well.

"What is this Stayne Dolmar, pray, but a City man from the Stock Exchange?"

Mrs. Dennistoun laughed gratingly. "He's that—oh, yes; but how much more? A giant of finance, if you please—a giant who's got me in his grasp, and all because of your wayward, unmerciful actions. Oh, look shocked, my dear, now when it's too late—now when this man whom you despise so loftily can fling us both into the gutter if he chooses!"

Anger bred anger in the listener. Lady Rosamond tossed her head, coloring, and hurried haughtily to the door; then paused, turned and measured her aunt scathingly from head to foot.

"If such things are really true they

reflect shame on yourself and make *me* wish I were dead. To borrow of that man! You deserve—" but here the girl checked herself. Her indignation had already cooled, grief supplanting it. "Oh, why did you not tell me when things began to threaten? We could have gone back to Lynwood—fled there, and economized, and struggled against debt!" She lifted both hands bewilderedly to her temples. "But wait; I'll see Stayne Dolmar this afternoon, if he comes, and he's sure to come. I'll induce him to give you time. He can't push matters—a man with all that money. He would never dream of doing anything horrible; he couldn't afford it."

"He will push matters," Mrs. Dennistoun said, calmed by the agitation she had roused. "It will be his revenge. He is that sort. It won't be revenge against me; it will be revenge against you *through* me. There's no use of your entreating him this afternoon. It will not serve; I know him to the marrow of his bones. He means only one course. Tell him that you'll be his wife, Rosamond, and he'll give me twenty years in which to pay it back."

Her niece shuddered. Then, stammeringly: "What—what is the sum? Is—it—very large?"

Mrs. Dennistoun named it, with a sullen curtness.

"Good heavens, Aunt Meta! So much! How *could* you?" She grasped the doorknob and quickly went out into the hall. As she was passing up stairs Mrs. Dennistoun followed her. She spoke across the bannister.

"Rose, Rose!" she appealed, "what will you say to him?"

"Anything, anything!" came the soft yet wild answer, "except *that*. No, no; never *that*!"

In the afternoon Stayne Dolmar appeared. There was the usual protracted serving of tea by two dapper footmen to a prattling throng. Women in picture hats and superfine draperies floated through the rooms or lounged in them. Men old and young, frock-coated, wondrous-waist-

coated, lilac-gloved, with beflowered buttonholes and Bond street neckties, flirted and loafed and sauntered, as their whims induced. There was a slight sprinkling of minor clergymen, a canon and a fat, pink-cheeked bishop. Eyes were incessantly turned toward Lady Rosamond. Three or four men were always gathered about her. She was never very talkative; English girls are somehow not required to be, and when, as in her case, they are surpassingly beautiful, devotees often regard their lapses into complete silence as an added charm. But no matter how many courtiers paid homage, Stayne Dolmar, tall, heavy, with his little eyes and huge nose set in a spacious, rubicund face, nearly always kept watch a few yards off. Now he stared at a photograph, now fumbled with the pages of a picture book, now vigorously polished an eyeglass, now played with a flossy spaniel or fed it biscuits. But he always kept watch.

After a while it happened that a Royal Person was driven up to the door in a modest brougham. When he entered everybody rose, and Mrs. Dennistoun made a deep curtsy. Presently he sat down beside Lady Rosamond, and laughed and chatted with her in the most ordinary way. All the worshippers retired respectfully, leaving the pair alone. Even Stayne Dolmar had to retire, but he kept watch, nevertheless, till the Royal Person looked at his watch, quitted his chair, cordially shook hands with his hostess's niece, and then moved forward among the guests, uttering pleasant words in his most gracious manner.

"I'm glad he's gone," whispered one lady to another, after he had taken leave. "The Royalties, when they pop in like that, do oppress one so!"

"Did you ever *hear* of such a belle as Rosamond Garthe?" returned the other lady. "But what an idiot she has been! It's that Ashburnham Leigh, you know—she's refused all of them for him! And they're both paupers. Romantic enough, but how foolhardy! Now she's nobody left

except Stayne Dolmar. And, do you know, they say he'll get her yet. He's inflexible; he won't give her up. I hear that he told Lady Clavisham" And then, as Mrs. Dennistoun approached, the gossiping tongue grew silent.

When the long, sweet English twilight fell everybody had disappeared; everybody, that is, except Mr. Dolmar, in his pervasive burliness and redness. He remained, having come back into the rooms after seeing a certain lady of very high station to her carriage. Mrs. Dennistoun stood near the doorway. He glanced at her and then peered about the empty rooms.

"Where has she gone?" he asked.

"Rosamond? I don't know. Up stairs, most probably. She supposed, no doubt, that you'd come back."

He started. "Oh, it's like that, is it?"

"Yes," came the low and dogged answer. "It's like that. It will always be. There's no use. I did my best this morning. I told her about—the money. She doesn't believe you'll expose me. But if you do, it will not matter. She's invincible, impregnable. You might as well give it up and do your worst. She'll never marry you, Dolmar."

He nodded, and said, stolidly, as if to himself, "Won't she?" Then he put one of his big, chubby hands on Mrs. Dennistoun's arm. "Listen . . . Oh, shake my hand away, if you like, but listen."

After that he spoke on for some time with his voice in his throat. Suddenly his auditor gave a slight scream. She lifted a finger to either ear. "Oh, no, no! It's too horrible! I refuse to permit it. Besides, the scandal!"

"What scandal?" he scoffed. Huddling his bulky shoulders together, he gave a smile that showed his large white teeth, irregular, like a dog's. How Mrs. Dennistoun hated that smile! To her it was ursine. "We should be married. She would have gone to my house in Ruthven Gate and—married me. Before evening

I should have managed that our union be known at ten of the best clubs and as many private houses. Marriage covers a multitude of tattlings. I was hastily summoned to Scotland, the report would run; your niece consented to accompany me there as my wife. I am phrasing all this," he continued, "in the past tense. That's because of your veto. Well, so be it. You've signed those two bills. One will be due on the first of July. Don't imagine I'll spare you. Lady Rosamond is quite wrong; I will not. A few years ago I might have done so; but then my position was insecure—now it is firm."

"But your proposal! Monstrous!" flashed Mrs. Dennistoun. "You say you'll drag me into the courts. Well, drag me there. I'll tell them how you tried to bribe me into betraying my poor Rose!"

He laughed. "No, you won't. You'll not be permitted. It will not concern the case—a purely mercenary suit. My lawyer will hush you up before you've said three words. What you *can* do, if you please, is to cry this little interview from the rooftops. But I shall deny, deny. In the end what will happen? You will go back to Lynwood with a good deal of lost caste. I shall remain in town—give great dinners and make the smart folk more indebted to me in many ways—a few of them are indebted to me in uglier ways, by-the-bye, than you are—and gradually get it believed that you are a kind of semi-lunatic, whom rage at my perfectly natural law measures drove to circulate silly slanders. . . . Think it all over quite calmly. Remember, I don't ask very much. And whether the plan fails or succeeds you shall have both your notes back, with a loan of fifteen hundred pounds—if you care to consider it a loan—by the aid of which you can comfortably ravel out your rather tangled affairs during the next three or four years. . . . Good-evening, and pray write me some sort of answer. To-night, if you please. Anything sent between now and midnight to the Carlton

Club in Pall Mall will be sure to find me."

At this very moment Lady Rosamond was deep in a letter, written with hasty and passionate eagerness, to her lover in the South of England. "I have been tortured this afternoon by the necessity of seeing people," ran one of her sentences. Again: "But I am helpless, and must endure the whole crushing ordeal for a fortnight longer. Oh, dearest, that I should write you so amazing and grievous a letter as I know this will prove! Never did I so wish, for both our sakes, that your lawsuit might end in victory! I felt deeply encouraged when I read your words of hope this morning and your warm eulogies of Mr. Condover's legal abilities. The suit, you tell me, nears its close, and Condover is fighting for you in tremendous earnest! Oh, my love, how I envy him! If I could serve you like that! But I can only love you with all my soul and pray for your success. You deserve just such a friend. And ah, in your trouble and suspense, down there among those wrangling lawyers, you should not be distressed by the shocking news I am forced to send. This morning, a little while after your letter came, Aunt Meta exploded before me a bombshell of positive horror. . . ." And then the girl told what that horror had been, and disclosed all her dread and dislike of the man who had now dared to pose as would-be *Shylock* in so hideous a bargain. On second thought, however, she tore up this final page, fearing that Ashburnham's fury might drive him to some rash step, and merely mentioned the desolating fact that Dolmar held her aunt in his probably merciless power.

She placed a stamp on the envelope of her letter and slipped out of doors in the pearly June twilight. A red letter box stood not far away, and she dropped the letter into it with her own hands. It was sad to distrust or suspect her aunt, but the last few hours had been so fraught with jar and shock that she seemed to see Mrs. Dennistoun's image in new, re-

peating outlines. Gladly would the girl even now have forgiven her everything. But as four or five days passed she revealed no sign that either her niece's pardon or censure was in the least a matter of concern. Barriers, dense yet impalpable, had risen between them. They spoke to each other, yet somehow with only the tips of their lips. They went out into the world together, ate together, bade each other good-night or good-morning, and yet, in point of actual mental nearness, felt hundreds of miles apart.

With Lady Rosamond this preoccupation was perhaps caused by hopeful news from her lover. He had replied with the most scornful comments on Mrs. Dennistoun's course, and had finished by assuring his sweetheart that the future seemed constantly to yield brighter perspectives, and that she might now be prepared any day to hear of how the Devonshire heritage had fallen to the rightful heir.

Of her longing and anxiety she told her aunt nothing. Nevertheless, it was not in the girl's nature to sulk or to cherish resentment. Day after day she met Stayne Dolmar at various functions, and coldly ignored him. She was so much of a reigning power that some male arm was always within reach by which she could escape his detested presence. As for Mrs. Dennistoun, the girl was always expecting her to speak out. At the faintest signal of remorse she would have thrown her arms about her aunt and let love reassert itself—the love that fright and disgust had been futile to kill. But her aunt gave no such signal. Was it possible that she did not repent her uncanny and ruthless overtures? The wild folly of having plunged herself into debt was something, after all, to pity her for. But the blood-curdling suggestion of a marriage with Dolmar! That, during certain intervals, made Lady Rosamond almost doubt the sanity of her old protectress and friend.

One morning she said, quite genially: "To-day, aunt, is Gertrude

Olmstead's garden party at Hampstead. It looks cloudy and uninviting, but I promised her I would go, and I've really grown very fond of her since we first met. It will be a long drive this unpleasant day, however, will it not?"

"I sha'n't go," said Mrs. Dennistoun, with mild decision. "I did not sleep well last night, and I've a touch of rheumatism in my left arm and shoulder. But, of course, you'll not stay away on this account. If you prefer not to drive, take your maid and go by train. It will be much quicker, and the Olmsteads are only a short walk from Finchley Road station."

She felt sure that her niece would assent to this plan, and she was not mistaken. Lady Rosamond left the house with her maid, Atchinson, at about four o'clock that afternoon. When she had gone Mrs. Dennistoun locked herself in her bedroom and stayed there for some time, tearless, rigid, suffering intense torment. At last she felt as if another moment of inactivity would drive her mad. Soon afterward she donned a street costume and went dazedly out of doors. Behind her veil she now kept saying:

"I cannot do it—I dare not do it! I dare not—I cannot!"

She realized that the dire thing must be done quickly or not at all, and sheer terror made her limbs feel so weak that she grew doubtful if they would support her. In Oxford street she found a tea house, entered it and seated herself at one of its obscurest rear tables. Then, before the tea was brought, she drew forth a letter. The envelope bore the name of her niece and the Upper Grosvenor street address. Both superscription and contents were in her own handwriting, and both were penciled, as if with extreme haste. For at least the twentieth time she read her own composition:

Ruthven Gate, Thursday.

MY DEAR ROSE:

A wretched accident has befallen me. I thought to walk away my headache

this afternoon in the Park. As I was crossing the street just in this region, I saw a cab at full speed hurrying toward me. I made a dash to reach the curb, but as I gained it fell to the sidewalk, with one ankle turned beneath me. I suffered greatly, and of course there was a crowd. Seeing Stayne Dolmar's huge house so near at hand, I begged to be taken there. He was not in and has not yet returned, but the servants, two or three of whom recognized me, are doing the best they can. I hope you will come as soon as you return from Hampstead and receive this. We can then consult how I am to be got away before night; for go back home I of course must, and yet I am in too much pain just now to think at all clearly. Pray bring no servant. There's a legion of them here.

YOUR AUNT META.

She replaced the letter in the envelope and sealed it. When the maid came with her tea she asked if a messenger boy could be procured. The maid answered "yes," and went away. Mrs. Dennistoun looked at her watch. There was plenty of time before her niece would reach Upper Grosvenor street. She swallowed some of the hot tea and felt stronger, steadier-nerved.

After all, this man who had her in his power was a hundredfold more to blame than she. And if everything failed he would not dare to expose her. Nor would he dare to do more than terrorize Rosamond. Should he attempt to force a marriage on the girl his so-called "position" would be shattered to atoms, and a million times more than the lucre that he already possessed would not save him from the scorn of his countrymen. Rosamond, of course, would never forgive her for the part she had played. Even if she became, through fright, the wife of Dolmar it must always be the same. She would never bring disgrace on her husband's co-plotter, but at the price of her unceasing resentment this agent must buy freedom from public shame.

When the messenger arrived Mrs. Dennistoun gave him the letter and paid him the required charge. Later

she passed placidly from the restaurant and repaired to the Park. It was a gloomy and chilly day, always threatening rain, yet never achieving more than a few surly drops. From the Marble Arch she strolled to that portion of the Park whence she could command a good view of Upper Grosvenor street for several hundreds of yards. Thus she saw her own stoop perfectly, and on it she kept a long and steadfast watch, sometimes at a slow saunter, sometimes ensconced on one of the benches behind the tall iron railing. Though she dreaded recognition from passers in a quarter so fashionable, she trusted to her plain attire, her drawn veil and the raw inclemency of the day.

At last a cab rattled up to the door of her house. Atchinson first emerged, then her niece. They quickly disappeared, and a new term of waiting began for the lady in the Park. It had lasted but a brief while, however, when two sharp whistles for a hansom sounded from a footman who came forth on the stoop. Very soon the required vehicle rounded one of the Park Lane corners. Then Lady Rosamond hurried down from the stoop, entered the cab alone and was driven rapidly away.

If Mrs. Dennistoun had seen the girl's face less distantly she would have noted there an odd conflict of expressions. On reaching home Lady Rosamond had been handed two missives. One, seeing that it wore the brown apparel of a telegram, she promptly tore open. Her heart bounded with joy as she read:

Suit won. A complete triumph. This is the last opposition they will presume to make. I am given the whole landed estate and twelve thousand a year outside of it. Hurrying to you for congratulations as fast as opportunity will allow.

ASHBURNHAM.

Lady Rosamond's eyes were dancing and her cheeks had begun to flame. She turned to Atchinson, a large, plain-visaged person, the very type of a respectful English tirewoman.

"Where is Mrs. Dennistoun?" she

excitedly asked. "Stay—no—I'll go to her." Then she glanced at the other communication. "No stamp?—aunt's handwriting!" Next minute she was reading the dastardly falsehood, and gave a stifled cry.

"How unfortunate! Look, Atchinson! Yes, you may read it all through. You see Mrs. Dennistoun was hurt near Ruthven Gate and has been taken into Mr. Dolmar's house. She wants me to come at once—and bring no servant."

"Yes—my lady." Atchinson appeared to jerk the words oddly from tense lips. "I—I—excuse me, my lady." She stood before her young mistress in evident embarrassment.

"Well, Atchinson, what is it?"

"Nothing. And yet—oh, my lady, mightn't there be some—danger?"

"Danger?" The girl totally misunderstood her. "Oh, I must go at once! Tell them to call a cab, immediately. And, Atchinson—if Mr. Leigh should come during my absence—I'm expecting him—be sure to say that I very much desired he should wait."

She was half-way on her journey before it flashed across her that to enter Stayne Dolmar's house would be stingingly distasteful. But in an instant pity overcame this repulsion. She rang the bell of the huge house at Ruthven Gate with a double wish buoying her. First, she longed to see just how grave was the injury her aunt had sustained. Second, she yearned to tell her of the splendid triumph secured by Ashburnham, and how her marriage—speedy, as she knew that her lover would now insist on making it—might work deliverance from Dolmar's threats. And yet—"how strange," she found herself reflecting, "that chance should have brought me here—here, of all places in town!" Everything was on a scale of great magnificence. The servant who answered her summons was a most imposing person in almost lurid livery, with powdered hair. "My aunt, Mrs. Dennistoun," began Lady Rosamond, "is she——"

But here a familiar voice cut her

short. "It's you at last, Lady Rosamond," said Stayne Dolmar, coming toward her through the huge tapestried hall, in which a marble fountain played, with marble mermaids and Tritons exquisitely carved reflecting themselves in its crystal pool. "Will you kindly accompany me?" Dolmar continued. He made no other greeting, and the newcomer, a little hesitantly at first, followed him as he walked a few steps ahead. Her feet soon exchanged the marble floor for one clad with mossy carpet. She had a confused sense of crossing three or four thresholds, and at length, when her guide had brought her to a chamber full of Turkish embellishments, a marvel of Oriental beauty, something about the mellow thud of the door, that he held open and then let close of its own springy impetus, caused her to stand quite still in vague alarm.

"But my aunt, Mr. Dolmar. Where is my aunt?"

"Presently, Lady Rosamond. Presently you shall see her—yes." He had lowered his head and was moving here and there among the divans and mats, with both hands thrust into his pockets.

The girl stared at him. Suddenly a pang of fear pierced her.

"My aunt," she re-demanded.

"Will you not stay quite calm, please," he urged, "while I say a few words to you?"

"About—about my aunt?"

"Yes—and other things." He stood quite aloof from her, and waved one hand toward a low chair, arabesqued and tufted, a little miracle of Turkish art, close at her side. Then, as she shook her head, he pursued: "Do not dream of the slightest danger. You are absolutely safe. Your aunt is not here. She wrote that letter of her own free will. I asked her to do it, and she complied. It was to bring you here. Don't turn so pale. I am merely telling you something; pray listen. After you have heard it you may go at once. You are only a captive, please believe, while I make to you my disclosure. It is one that can-

not fail, I am sure, to interest you. Afterward you will be perfectly free to go."

"I—I prefer to go now—without hearing another word!"

Dolmar spoke very softly. "Go as a ruined woman!" He paused a moment to watch the effect of this lie—for an atrocious lie it was—before he developed it, unfolded it in all its bane and blight.

"Ruined? I?" She coolly laughed at this. "You are ridiculous." But he saw a fluttering in the bend of her white throat, just below the chin.

"It does sound sensational, does it not?" he acceded. "Quite in the Drury Lane 'unhand-me-villain' style, except that there needn't be the faintest loud talk, and the villain—if he deserve so bad a name—hasn't the remotest idea of becoming violent. My sole request, as I've already stated, is that you will grant me your attention for a few moments. The truth is, my dear Lady Rosamond, you have been seen entering my house alone. But that is not all. No less than five persons have seen you enter it, and these are persons whose tongues can, and often do, make themselves alarmingly sharp."

"You—set them—to spy on me?" The voice that addressed him was lifeless, but with it went a look that blazed contempt.

Before this look Dolmar's glance wavered and drooped. He had told her his lie. Believing it, would not terror strike her helpless? And he still assured himself that she must believe it.

He was right. He saw her slender form sway a little now and one of her hands catch furtively at the cushioned chair.

This evidence of weakness added to the diabolism of his courage. "No matter, Lady Rosamond, how these people got their knowledge, they have observed and concluded, and you are fearfully incriminated. You came here alone, and they are aware of it. By to-morrow evening all London—or at least all the London that can spoil a gentlewoman's name—will be talk-

ing of your act. Now, I have a clergyman here." He swung his big body round and parted the rich hangings of a door that apparently led to other apartments beyond those already traversed. On the panel of this door he rapped thrice, and then re-confronted his companion.

"This gentleman," he resumed, "will make us man and wife before two witnesses the moment you give consent." His tones took a blandly persuasive key. They were indeed so suave that anyone hearing them, with no comprehension of the meaning they conveyed, would have thought them inspired by actual chivalry.

Lady Rosamond did not answer. Perhaps she could not, just then. A little later, from the door at which Dolmar had rapped, a young man in clerical attire appeared. He could scarcely have been much older than two-and-twenty. His face, refined of outline, was filled with timidity and pain. He walked draggingly, as though every fresh step hurt either muscles or nerves, or both. He held a dark book as women do, hugging it beneath one arm.

After the departure of her niece Mrs. Dennistoun suddenly blamed herself, with a guilty flush, for not remembering that the girl might, in all likelihood, mention to her maid the contents of the letter. Agitated by this thought, she was undecided whether to enter the house or not, and so walked, in her confusion and perplexity, toward Hyde Park Corner. Soon after she had ceased to watch her own residence another cab dashed up to the door, and from it alighted Ashburnham Leigh.

"Both Mrs. Dennistoun and Lady Rosamond out?" he said, disappointedly, to the servant who admitted him. "Well, I'll wait." And he passed up stairs into the drawing-room. A moment later Atchinson appeared.

"Beg pardon, sir," she said, "but Lady Rosamond asked me, just before she went away, to tell you, if you

came while she was out, that she hoped you'd remain till her return."

He noticed something nervous in the woman's demeanor; he had known her for years down in Norfolkshire, where she had not held the specialized position, as now, of his sweetheart's maid.

"What's up, Atchinson?" he queried. "Don't you feel well?" So gloriously happy was Ashburnham himself that it seemed to him as if everybody in the world ought to reflect his joy.

"Oh, yes, sir, thank you. But, if you please, sir, I—I think I might as well show you this." And Atchinson handed him the letter that her young mistress had so recently given her.

Ashburnham scanned it. "Too bad!" he exclaimed. Then, frowning abruptly: "She has gone *there!* Well, fatality, I suppose. . . . I say, Atchinson," as he handed her back the letter, "you seem to have something on your mind. What is it?"

"Oh, sir," said the woman, with a little perturbed curtsy, "I—I didn't want my lady to go there *alone!*"

"But Mrs. Dennistoun is there. Doesn't she herself write so?"

"Yes, sir—oh, yes." Another perturbed curtsy. "Will you have some tea, sir?"

"Thank you—and please have it very hot."

Ashburnham flung himself into a chair and took up a book from a table near it. He tried to read, but could not fix his attention. When the tea arrived it was not Atchinson that brought it. Was she afraid, he reflected, that he would question her? She certainly *had* shown an odd bearing. Soon he began to pace and repace the floor. How long would Rosamond remain away? Ought he to join her at Ruthven Gate? But she had left an enjoiner for him to remain, if he came, and her commands, like her treasured self, were sacred. Still, this accident might subject her to fresh unwelcome advances from a man she hated—a man she had both told him and written him she hated, and who had proved himself the most pertinacious of all her re-

cent suitors. This was doubtless what Atchinson meant. What else *could* she have meant? So, nearly an hour passed, and then an amazing experience burst on Ashburnham.

Tired, with all her boldness beginning to wane, and harsh pangs of conscience replacing it, Mrs. Dennistoun let herself into the house by means of her own latchkey. She glanced for a moment into the dining-room and then ascended the stairs. Her next step was toward the drawing-room. She crossed the threshold and came face to face with the sole occupant.

"Ashburnham!"

"It's *you*, Mrs. Dennistoun?" As the young man spoke he sprang toward her. "You're—*well*? You're *not* laid up at Stayne Dolmar's house? What does this mean?"

"Who told you?" was all the astounded woman could say.

"Why, Atchinson, of course. Rose gave her the letter—*your* letter—before she hurried to you. Was it a forgery?"

A gush of wild tears answered him as Mrs. Dennistoun sank into a chair. "Oh, Ashburnham, he *made* me write it! I'm in his power! I've borrowed money from him—he's threatened me with exposure in the courts—he's—"

Ashburnham towered menacingly over her for a second, with clenched hands lifted high, as if he meant to strike her dead. Perhaps, for just that fleet second, he did mean to strike her dead. Then, rushing from the room, he left her huddled together in physical affright, her very sobs choked because of it and her face bloodless.

It seemed to him an eternity, when he had gained Park Lane, before he could find a cab. As one stopped he spoke hurriedly to the driver, whose eyes quickly glistened. Another eternity, and he stood at last on Stayne Dolmar's stoop.

"My name is Ashburnham Leigh," he said, with a swift push through the doorway that a large flunkey unclosed. "I wish to see Lady Rosamond Garthe,

whom I know to be here. Quick, now, my man; take me at once where she is."

The attendant stood scowling and dismayed. "My orders, sir——"

"I've no concern with your orders," was the sharp interruption. "You'll take mine, and show me where I can find the lady I've mentioned. If you refuse, I warn you that for all your master's money the police may give you *their* orders before you're many hours older."

Ashburnham now stood several yards forward in the great hall. The man, who knew half patrician London by sight and had a keen eye for faces, remembered him perfectly. He had seen him in this same house at a great ball scarcely three weeks before. What he knew and what he guessed concerning Lady Rosamond's appearance there to-day only he could have told.

He slowly shut the heavy door, while Ashburnham, with visible impatience, waited. Then, in all his braveries of powdered hair and yellow braidings and silk-encased calves, he walked close to the young man whose attitude was so unceremoniously and uncompromisingly beyond him.

"I don't like, sir," he said, with much quiet respect and a certain distinct dignity, "to have that word 'police' addressed to me. I have not lived very long in Mr. Dolmar's employment." And then the ingrained conservatism, snobbery—call it what one will—of the upper-class English servant would have its way. "I lived for twelve years, sir, until the time of his death, with the late Earl of Walthamstow, and——"

"Lord Walthamstow!" broke in Ashburnham. "That speaks to your credit. I knew him well. Indeed, he happened to be my uncle."

"Oh, why, yes, sir!" exclaimed the man. "Mr. Ashburnham Leigh! I've so often heard him speak of you! But you never came—" And there the speaker paused, and shifted his eyes.

"The family quarrel," said Ashburnham. "You heard, of course.

It was between the Countess and my mother."

"Yes, sir—I heard, of course."

Ashburnham caught the man's hand and gripped it hard. "Look here, John—"

"James, sir."

"Look here, James, you're living with a scoundrel. I want you to help me—to help your old master's nephew! I—I feel as if I couldn't speak fast enough, John—James, I mean—for I'm in such a devil of a hurry!" Then, as he continued, James turned as pale as his artificially whitened locks.

"My God, sir! Excuse me. But I'll—I'll help all I can. Her ladyship is in yonder. You pass through two rooms, and in the third, I think, you'll find her."

"Come *with* me, James," Ashburnham said. He looked steadily at the man. "You understand. I've been very explicit. You told me that you'd help me all you could. And if you keep your word you shall never regret it. I promise you that."

Without waiting for reply Ashburnham walked on. He heard James's footsteps close behind him. Two rooms were crossed, and then, at a closed door, Ashburnham paused.

"Listen, James," he said. "I hear voices."

One was Dolmar's. "You'll risk it all, you foolish girl!"

The other voice was Lady Rosamond's. "I'll risk everything. Let people talk as they please. It's you, as I'll prove, who have risked far too much!"

"One moment. Your aunt?"

"Poor, half-maddened Aunt Meta! I'll make her confess the whole folly into which you drove her!"

After that a slight silence. Then the voice Ashburnham knew so well.

"How dare you! Let go my arm! I'll—"

Ashburnham tried the doorknob. It would not turn.

"Mr. Dolmar!" cried a new, pitiously piping voice, "I forbid you to keep this lady here against her will!"

Ashburnham had veered round to-

ward James. "He's locked it. Come—you're strong. We'll break it open!"

"Knock first, sir," began James. "But stop!" he broke off. "Follow me. There's another way in."

A few rapid turnings, and they found this way. The door at the end of their dizzying route was unlocked. Ashburnham flung it open.

What he saw was an interior orientally beautiful, and Dolmar clasping the wrist of Lady Rosamond and devouring her face with glances that made the ugliness of his own a weird pathos of entreaty. He was fat, uncouth, repulsive, and the grasp was unquestionably one of lawless violence. Yet, somehow, despair and real passion so changed his entire attitude that there was no brutal hint in it, but rather the mute, if turbid, protest of a spirit driven by its own pampered and flattered past into extremities of appeal.

Ashburnham saw nothing of this. Dolmar heard the advancing step, and half-turned. Then the other leaped on him, and he was clutched and whirled round. The two men faced each other; and Dolmar, with a smothered roar, struck out. He hit an arm, and then a clenched fist, that were Ashburnham's defense. His offense followed lightning-like, and Dolmar was felled and half stunned by a blow between the eyes which might, indeed, have done worse if a low and broad divan just behind him had not received his big, flaccid shape.

James and the young clergyman bent over him. He groaned forlornly in his ludicrous yet woful collapse. He swore wrathfully, half incoherently, but it was clear that, though his brain was whirling, he had by no means lost consciousness.

Ashburnham's arms were about his sweetheart now. "I learned everything, everything, Rose! I saw your aunt; she confessed. Come, now; courage. It's a sad plight for a bride, but our honeymoon will be bright enough."

"A bride? honeymoon?" she murmured.

Ashburnham, with great calmness, while he kept one hand clasping hers, turned toward the little group of three. His look selected the trembling young priest.

"You're a clergyman of the Church of England?"

"Yes," was the faltered answer.

"Do you wish to be disgraced forever—damned, shunned, execrated? Yes? In that case take your own course. . . . No? Then I can save you." Here Ashburnham beckoned to the wretched fellow, who drew nearer. In his ear Ashburnham spoke swiftly and sternly.

The clergyman, drearily pallid, gave stammering answer. "Yes—yes—I know. But—witnesses are required."

"How many?"

"Two."

"Well, *there* are two! One is James, yonder, and the other is his master."

The miserable young man waved

helplessly his slender hands. "But he—Mr. Dolmar—is——"

"Insensible? Nothing of the sort. I know just how hard I struck him, and he's now perfectly aware of all that passes." Ashburnham raised a warning finger. "Stand over there by the mantel. Get your book. Obey me, or you'll rue your refusal till the last hour you live!"

The unhappy creature did obey. Here a deep groan sounded from Dolmar. But he did not rise from the divan, where James had set a pillow behind his aching and throbbing head.

Ashburnham now clasped more tightly the hand of his love, and his eyes burned into hers all the adoration that he lacked opportunity to speak.

"You consent, Rose?"

"Why not?" she answered, very faintly.

He led her toward the clergyman. In a tone tranquil and yet teeming with command, he again spoke:

"Marry me to this lady."



ANTEROS

IN those dim years before I met with you
 I dreamed how Love one day would come to me,
 A plumed prince, who on his bended knee,
 His sovereign lady would acclaim and woo,
 And I should hold his homage as my due,
 With smiling pride elude him, nor agree
 Too readily to listen to his plea,
 Though, as I dreamed, his every word was true.

Then came the night I looked into your eyes.
 O Love that burns and memory that sears!
 I am no longer proud, though strangely wise
 In passion's mysteries and pain and tears—
 A starving beggar at your knees, who cries
 For bread to dull the yearning of the years!

ELSA BARKER.



ONLY ORNAMENTAL

MRS. WAGGLES—Isn't this a nice, comfortable cozy-corner?
 WAGGLES—It used to be, my dear, before you began fixing it up.

OTTO AND THE AUTO

'TIS strange how fashion makes us change the objects we admire;
 We used to sing the tireless steed, but now the steedless tire.
 So Otto bought an auto, so as not to be antique,
 But the thing was autocratic,
 As well as automatic,
 And the auto wouldn't auto as it ought to, so to speak.

He thought to get an auto-operator for the work,
 And first he tried a circus man and then he tried a Turk,
 For he knew the circus man drove fifty horses with success;
 And if a man be shifty
 Enough to manage fifty,
 It's palpable enough he ought to manage one horse-less.

As for the Turk, 'tis also plain, deny it if you can,
 He ought to run an auto, since a Turk's an Ottoman.
 'Twas all no use, so Otto moved to Alabama, purely
 That he might say, "I'm Otto,
 From Mobile, and my motto:
 'A Mobile Otto ought to run an automobile surely.'"

Then Otto sought to auto on the auto as he ought to,
 But the auto sought to auto as Otto never thought to,
 So Otto he got hot, oh, very hot! as he ought not to,
 And Otto said, "This auto *ought* to auto, and it's *got* to."
 And Otto fought the auto, and the auto it fought Otto,
 Till the auto also got too hot to auto as it ought to.
 And then, Great Scott! the auto shot to heaven—so did Otto—
 Where Otto's auto autos now as Otto's auto ought to.

EDMUND VANCE COOKE.



SOMETHING BETTER

MRS. PECK—When I go away to the country do you think you will be
 able to exist without me?

HENRY PECK—Why—er—my dear, it won't be existing then.



TRULY A THOROUGHbred

WANDERING WILLIE—I've seen better days. I uster be in sassiety.
 WEARY WAGGLES—So ye've never done nuthin' all yer life?

ACCORDING TO GIBSON

By Erin Graham

FRANKNESS about one's personal attractions is rare. But I wish to state that even my brother Ted admitted I was not as plain as I might be. There is a faint praise that damns, but the faint praise bestowed by a brother means more than a cycle of sonnets from a very minor poet, or orchids from a French nobleman in contracted circumstances.

I am tall, not too slender, and my head possesses what Laura Jean Libbey would call "a deer-like poise." All these things I regarded as desirable, and secretly pitied women who were waistless and whose necks were brief. But two years ago a great affliction was laid on me, although it approached in the disguise of a compliment.

On an evil day, Charles Dana, whose surname is Gibson, became an illustrator of note. The American maiden, according to Gibson, had been before the public for many seasons before Gerald Crofts, who is poet by hair and by avocation, discovered in my face a resemblance to the stately creatures whom our artist had portrayed so often. At first, I was exalted in spirit and tried to look as Gibsonish as possible. I was visiting the Seatons in their Adirondack home at the time of the discovery, and most of the women in the house party were scornful to a degree and could not see the resemblance. This lack of vision on their part assured me that Gerald was in the right, and my mien became loftier.

Frank Seaton had been very attentive in New York during the Winter, and I was placidly looking forward to

the day when he would break forth into a proposal. I cannot say that his footsteps made my twenty-four-year-old heart flutter, or that I considered him a knight or a hero, or anything of that kind. In fact, there was nothing brilliant about Frank, except the color of his ties and the gleam of his diamond studs. But, although he had little literary knowledge, his bank book was above suspicion, and his heart was as generous as the checks in his imported trousers. Wherefore I considered him carefully and reached the modest conclusion that I might safely take Frank and his fortune, to have and to hold, until death or divorce should us part. But verily, I had reckoned without my host, or rather without the son of my host; and I found to my discomfort that the more I was called "the Gibson Girl" the less anxious seemed my supposed adorer to call me his.

A sweet young thing from Chicago—Ethel Rand—was the only woman in the household who had taken kindly to my new title, and I heard her tell Frank that I was "such a splendid woman with a truly regal air." She was rather insignificant herself, with a quantity of fair hair that she arranged in a floating fashion about her small, pale face; and her eyes had an appealing expression, that might indicate a yearning either for another cup of tea or for lifelong protection.

One night I was wandering about near the golf links when I heard my name uttered by the gentle Ethel in a tone that made me pause. She and Frank were seated on a rustic bench that suggested first love and all things idyllic. Perhaps I should be ashamed

to confess it—but I reflected that all was fair in feminine war, and I listened with the most flattering attention.

“But are you sure, Frank, that you don’t love Miss Ashley? She’s so magnificent and all that.”

“Dead sure!” said the perfidious Frank. “It’s all very well to look up to a woman and call her after foolish sketches. I for one can’t stand those black-and-white figures; give me a real good picture with lots of rich color in it. I never could live up to that sort of woman, you know. A man likes a dear little pet, like——”

But I did not wait for him to complete the comparison. My sense of honor, as I am pleased to think, here asserted itself, and I realized that it would be wrong to listen to lovers’ sacred confidences.

The engagement was announced on the following day, and there was a shadow of disappointment in Miss Rand’s azure eyes when I showed no astonishment, but congratulated Frank with easy cordiality. He was a little confused and very much over-spread with blushes, while his dainty fiancée remarked:

“It’s so sweet of you to say pretty things about me, for I feel very young and ignorant. I’m glad that you approve, because you and Frank have been *such* friends.”

“Indeed! I should not call you ignorant. You have very little to learn, I am sure.” I spoke lightly, but Miss Ethel understood, and her blue eyes looked more appealing than ever.

The wedding took place in November, and was a wonderful chrysanthemum affair, with a smiling bride and a nervous groom, who was dressed not wisely but too well. I sent a beautiful set of Browning as my present, because I knew it would be of no use to either of them, and it seemed like an assertion of intellectual superiority.

By this time I had begun to weary of the Gibson rôle; and when Christmas came, bringing me pictures of that horrid, stagey girl in every pose

and plight, I was ready to curse Charles Dana in pure Castilian speech, and to wish that he might marry a woman who would wear curlpapers until luncheon hour. Gerald Crofts and his theories were the fashion, and therefore all my city friends and acquaintances became enamored of the Gibson idea, and treated me accordingly. I was given distant and respectful admiration, and when I became disgusted and sulky people called my mood “interesting hauteur,” while their admiration increased. It is all very well to be called the possessor of a distinctive style, but no mere woman cares to be regarded as if she were a Gothic cathedral or the Sphinx. Men do not fall in love with a “type,” and it is unpleasant to be approved of but not desired.

At length I resorted to various devices for destroying the Gibson illusion. But whether I wore my hair in bristling pompadour or dragged it mournfully across my cheeks in a Burne-Jones fashion, the style was of no avail in altering my resemblance to those majestic young persons who had become my evil geniuses. The most tantalizing feature of their frequent appearance was that someone was always looking lovingly at them, implying that their distinction meant lovers and lucre. I gazed at them as they leaned romantically over rustic fences or reclined in classic poses on the links, and wondered how they were so stately and lovable at the same time. I had wild thoughts of writing to the artist and beseeching him to turn his gifted pencil to the depiction of picturesque “piccaninies” or Indian chiefs done in red. But after a week’s consideration I resolved not to do anything so hazardous. Then I made a solemn vow that I would become fat and comfortable in appearance, and to that purpose devoted myself to saccharine food, feeling it was better to be fat than formidable. But my mental worry must have directly counteracted the cream I drank and the chocolate I devoured, and I still remained the

statuesque lady of the illustrations. The years sauntered by, and I resolved to go to Europe, where I should avoid English and American tourists.

I had a delightful rest from my spectre, and Ted and I took a trunkful of photographs. But after twelve months of French and Spanish voices one has a kind of longing for the sights and sounds of Lesser New York. So we came back, and once more I found myself at the Seatons' Summer home. Frank and Ethel were there, and matrimony seemed to agree excellently with their placid souls. Ethel's eyes had lost their plaintive expression, and Frank's clothing was not quite so fearfully and wonderfully made as that of his bachelor days.

Feminine friendship is a mild form of insanity, in my usual estimation. But to my surprise I became very fond of a rosy-cheeked young Scotch-woman who was visiting the Seatons. Her name was Gladys Campbell, and she was the first natural woman I had met. Her father had attained unto wealth by the road, or rather watery path, of transatlantic steamers, and his only daughter had become famous by refusing a seventy-year-old earl. I asked her one day if the report was true, and she laughingly confessed.

"Why should I have married the poor old body?"

"But the title!"

"Indeed, the name of Campbell is none to be ashamed of. And then, who could love a tottering old man near his dotage?"

She really believed in love, then—this heiress of many acres of heather. I at last told her of my Gibson sorrow, but she refused to see anything mournful about it. Just as I had finished a second recital of my loathing for the sinister pictures, I saw a stalwart man coming across the links. There was something strangely familiar about the figure and the strong, clean-shaven face. Miss Campbell saw him, too, and exclaimed:

"Why, it's my brother Jack. He's a week earlier than I expected."

Miss Campbell's brother was almost a giant, and yet he did not seem to be too strong for grace. But even as I shook hands with him I was conscious of a half-recognition of previous acquaintance that annoyed me. At dinner he sat next to me, and as I turned to talk about the latest novel, Gladys said:

"Jack, Mr. Crofts says you are like a Gibson man."

We were a small party at dinner that night, and everyone turned to survey the blushing Scot. Frank, with the tact that makes him a comforting friend in a crisis, almost shouted:

"By Jove, that is queer! Marian Ashley is always called the Gibson Girl." He stared and chuckled meaningly, until we thoroughly understood his suggested development of our horrible resemblance. I knew then where I had seen those resolute features, and I felt a strong desire to do murder and relieve Gerald Crofts of what he called in his poems "the feverish dream of life." But a Gibson maiden would not be at home in the chair of electrocution, and I crushed my bloodthirsty impulse. I had found Jack Campbell such an interesting man, although, or perhaps because, we had said very little to each other; and now this suggested likeness would spoil even an acquaintanceship. He had, of course, a horror of ridicule. All men have, but Scotchmen have it in an acute form. If I had not belonged to New York society and the nineteenth century, I should certainly have mingled tears with the mint sauce.

The festive game of whist was played until a late hour, and though I understand just enough of the rules of the game to reduce my partner to suicidal depression, I was rather glad of the opportunity the exceeding calm afforded to study the features of the representative of the Campbell clan. Of course I was inexpressibly tired of the women in those golf and seaside sketches; but I had, to a cer-

tain extent, admired the man, and there was really some cause for Gerald's remark concerning Mr. Campbell. His face was stern, with the kind of severity that is all the more winsome when it relaxes into tenderness. But what was I thinking of! I was not a schoolgirl of the white-muslin-and-gush stage. Nevertheless, I continued to drown myself in the depths of a pair of dark-blue eyes, that were just the color of a Scotch loch; and I could imagine them becoming an intense gray-blue, just like Loch Lorne when the storm clouds hover over it. And what a strong hand he had, with its healthy brown tinge! The fingers were powerful but supple, and might have belonged to a Highland chief or a minstrel in his halls.

I looked up, once more to encounter a glance of intense amusement from the aforementioned eyes. Tell it not in Gotham, publish it not in the society journals—I blushed as redly, as hotly, as if I had been fifteen and convent-bred. Scottish lochs, indeed! His eyes were of a very ordinary blue, and he had an intensely conceited expression that was enough to mar a beauty that consisted merely of regular features. He had an odious smile, that did not relax his firm mouth by a single line. After the whist ordeal was over, and my partner—the elder Mr. Seaton—had sought consolation in a decanter, I retired to a small table and proceeded to open a large volume I had not seen before. Mr. Campbell approached, as I was listlessly regarding the first sketch, and to my horror I found that I was looking at two lovers of the Gibson type. Mr. Campbell saw them, and lazily remarked, as he seated himself near me:

“I believe you are not proud of your Gibson reputation, Miss Ashley. I am a fellow victim, as a party of tourists, with whom I traveled through the Tyrol last year, discovered the same resemblance that Crofts professes to see. I don't perceive it myself. It is rather odd that we should meet.”

“Stranger things have happened,” I replied, stiffly. “And I think that *you* are really very like the Gibson type.”

The originality of my first remark seemed to appeal to him, and there was a smile near his eyes as he said: “I suppose you are rather sick of his pictures by this time.”

“Entirely. I think his people are hideous.”

“Ah! and you think I am like the Gibson Man.” He laughed openly now, and I hated him with violence. There was absolutely nothing to be said, as I had burned my fleet behind me by my previous statement, and I sat there in foolish silence, blushing profoundly for the second time in an hour, and miserably conscious that he was deliberately scrutinizing my unfortunate features.

“I can hardly agree with you about the sketches. I consider the Gibson Girl a miracle of grace and sweetness.”

Just then Gladys joined us, and I could have wept on her blue satin shoulder strap in sheer gladness at her coming.

The next day I attempted to avoid Mr. Campbell; but he appeared provokingly unconscious of my coldness, and treated me as if I were a child whose whims were to be tolerated, but who was on no account to have the moon, should she manifest a desire for that silvery trifle. So a week passed away, and I was on the verge of nervous prostration through pure irritability over the Gibson Man's superior attitude. I could not quarrel with him, because he was so disgustingly polite, although a twinkle was never far from his eyes, and he was always cheerful in his hope that I was not “feeling tired.” My manner might be of the Klondike, but his was always of the temperate zone. One afternoon, after he had beaten me in a tennis set, Frank Seaton, who never saw anything beyond his heavenward-pointing nose, and who invariably talked of what he *did* see, remarked:

“You two ought to be great chums,

but you are always unfair to Campbell, Marian."

As Frank walked away I felt an idiotic tear stealing down my cheek.

"What is the matter, Miss Ashley? Have I offended you, or was the game too much for you? I'm awfully sorry."

The tone was contrite tenderness itself; and—yes—his eyes were rather nice, when he did not laugh. But there were other people approaching; and I fled from the field to seek the very best rice powder, and to wonder what would have happened had the "other people" kept their distance.

But when dinner came some demon prompted me to be as perverse as woman can be, and I almost succeeded in annoying my Highland chief. At last I became ashamed of a speech I had made concerning the "Land o' Cakes," and I lowered my voice becomingly as I said:

"I am afraid that last speech was rude. I really didn't mean it."

The blue eyes met mine with a flash of steel, and a voice as chilly as the breeze from the Hebrides replied:

"I am glad to hear that you did not mean it."

Dessert was eaten in a silence that could be felt, and after the pomp and circumstance of black coffee, I pleaded a severe headache—it was not all a lie—and took refuge under a spreading chestnut tree, where there was a beloved old chair whose antique ugliness went back to Colonial days. But never could it have held a more disconsolate damsel than the one who flung herself on its wooden mercy and bewailed the evil of her ways.

How abominable I had been! I was ill-bred and rude. Because of Frank Seaton's miserable jokes and a certain sub-mocking smile in the eyes of an uncouth Scot I had lost all sense of dignity and had acted like a spoiled child. But was the brother of Gladys Campbell uncouth? He resented repeated attacks on his country; but any self-respecting man would be capable of such resentment. I had

always despised the Anglomaniac, but it was hardly necessary for me to become a Scotophobic.

As I mused on my sins of incivility they seemed so large that, for the second time in twenty-four hours, tears came to my eyes. I pride myself on being an unweeping maiden, but on that occasion I gave way completely, and wept freely on the unsympathetic bark of the chestnut tree.

Suddenly I became aware of a cigar fragrance, and a cigar means man. I looked up in dismay to see a red light, beyond which was the concerned face of Mr. Campbell. The straggling light of an impertinent moonbeam revealed my face, that must have looked damp in the extreme. There was another chair beneath that old tree, and Mr. Campbell dragged it very close to mine before he seated himself.

"Please tell me what is the matter. You must be in great distress."

"Nothing," came incoherently from the inadequate shelter of my best lace handkerchief.

"But you don't expect me to believe that, you know." My left hand was suddenly grasped firmly by two very capable hands belonging to the masterly Scot. "Your hand is very hot, and I should think you were feverish."

"You—you wouldn't care to see my tongue, would you?" I gasped, hysterically. Mr. Campbell laughed softly and continued to caress my hand. I did not try to withdraw it, because he is a very strong man, and there is nothing more undignified than a struggle. I think we did not say anything for about five minutes, and then my nerves became a little more controllable.

"Mr. Campbell," I began, firmly, "I have been horribly rude to you for several days, and——"

"But you have not been crying about that?"

"N—no—not exactly. I am altogether cross and blue, and I don't know what I'm crying about. It sounds ridiculous, but I think it must be second childhood."

He was holding both my hands by this time, and seemed to be thinking deeply.

"Miss Ashley, why do you dislike me so much?"

"I—I don't exactly dislike you."

"Thank you. I wonder if Seaton's idiotic jokes have anything to do with your very marked aversion to my society." Then he proceeded to kiss my hands for, I should say, about ten minutes.

"Marian," he said, very softly, "do you dislike me at all? Do you think it would be uninteresting to spend your life in finding fault with me?"

"I—I don't know," was the only answer that my stupid lips could form. He promptly placed his arm round my waist, and I hid my face on his shoulder, because tears are not becoming to a woman of any style of loveliness.

"Then you will really be Marian Campbell some time, very soon?"

"On one condition."

"What is it, my American beauty?"

"That you will never—never, even when I am most unkind, call me 'the Gibson Girl.'"

"I shall always have much prettier names for you than that, darling.

But you haven't called me 'Jack' yet."

So I called him "Jack" and several other things, and we returned to the other world—beyond the chestnut tree—where the people were playing whist and similar tiresome games. The players looked at us with suspicion; but we sat in a corner and looked at Gibson pictures with the greatest calmness.

Gladys came to my room that night in a pale-blue dressing gown and a state of excitement.

"It is so delightful of you two people. I thought you disliked Jack; but I am so glad. Of course I could see from the first that he was awfully in love with you." Gladys is a remarkably sweet woman, and has such good judgment.

"How could you think I disliked him, Gladys? No one could really do that. Of course, I didn't want to be too—too effusive."

Gladys laughed. "Why, you have been like an Arctic night in manner. But I know you'll be happy ever after. And, Marian—" she added, as she reached the door.

"Yes?"

"We'll have some lovely Gibson tableaux."



SUNDAY IN SLEEPY HOLLOW

THE poppy in a sunny nook
 Puts on a brand-new bonnet
 Of scarlet satin, pinked and frilled,
 With dewdrops shining on it.
 The marigold beside the gate
 Is dancing with its fellow
 And blowing kisses to the wind
 In fluffy skirts of yellow.

The maiden lilies stand apart
 In clean white muslin dresses.
 With morning glories pink and blue
 The corn binds up its tresses.
 The pansy wears a velvet cloak,
 Though this is Summer weather,
 For in their Sunday very best
 The flowers are out together.

MINNA IRVING.

THE KISSES OF ARCADY

By Richard Wilsted

ARCADIUS DOLGONÓGHI stood six feet three in his Cos-sack riding boots. He had generally to stoop in order to kiss anything, from the gilt cross held out by a *pope* at a service of the Orthodox Church to the bald pate of Fethersbee at the Liao-kow Club.

Ladies laughed at Arcadius, and men snubbed him, but children, who are primitive barbarians, were naturally attracted by such a great, handsome, emotional savage, and they accepted his hirsute kisses and his paper-covered caramels from Moscow with delight. As for the European women in the small Chinese outpost of Liao-kow, they compared notes and agreed that no man could be taken seriously whose knowledge of three languages was confined to conjugating the regular verb "to love." The hands of them all had been squeezed in his lion's paw and had felt the noisy pressure of his lips. They said that it hurt, and added that his ogling was overdone. He had eyes like a big dog, and they looked unutterable tenderness at the world, and particularly at Fethersbee, who was fifty and fat, and stood only five feet and a half in his white spats.

Dolgonóghi was highly paid for a duty he did not perform, namely, the management of a coal mine in Manchuria. Vanderlyn, an American engineer, did the work on a small salary, drank *vodka* with his chief, and referred to him in Anglo-Saxon company as "the Kissing Bug." When asked how he contrived to escape the sting he would wink and reply, grimly:

"Virginia plug. The K. B. has a

holy horror of chewing tobacco. I never used the weed in this form till I joined the mine, but I have found it a specific. The K. B. can only smoke pasteboard and camel's hair. Officially I chew, but on the quiet I still enjoy a Key West."

Fethersbee did not chew, smoke or drink, and was mortally shy. He was the local British Consul, one of the old school, founded on the cramming and muzzling system. He had been loaded down in London with book lore to pass a competitive examination, and after arrival in Peking he had been further handicapped with Chinese hieroglyphics. To complete the derangement of his balance, he had been kept ten years in the miasmatic valley of the Yangtse, and then sent to Manchuria to try to bluff the Russian Bear.

When Dolgonóghi's mine had been wrecked by a strike of coolies, which was connived at by the local Manchurian officials, he escaped with Vanderlyn and his interpreter to Liao-kow, where he spent the Winter, pending reference of the matter to St. Petersburg and Peking. At the club bar he waxed maudlin over his misfortunes, weeping and wringing the hands of his listeners.

"Ya loose yeversing. Moy house burn, moy furnish shmash. Zat nossing. Moy feeling hurt. Zat too much. Mandarin come at mine. Say 'Yerth Dragon' trouble; not can vork mine no more. Ya give him plenty *vodka*. Ya say: 'You moy freend, googe freend.' Moy heart varm for him. Ya kees him. Him say Ya bite him. Not bite. Ya kees—like zees!"

Here he made an effort to salute Fethersbee, who ducked in time.

"Him vish fight moy viz sword. Ya say: '*Dovolno!*' [Enough!] Ya keel him viz vip!"

"That's right," remarked Vanderlyn, aside, to the others. "When he kissed the old Tartar the fellow did not understand and tried to draw his sabre, but it was rusted in the sheath. The K. B. did not need a second hint, but promptly knocked him on the head with the butt of a Chinese cart whip. There was the devil to pay. I thought I saw my finish. I had to hold up the crowd with my 44."

Arcadius filled all the glasses with curaçao, taking no denial.

"You all moy googe freend. Drink, drink! Moy feeling hurt if not drink."

Fethersbee had retreated behind a billiard table, but the Russian pursued him with a brimming glass.

"*Nyet, nyet*, Sir Fezzersbee! You moy googe freend. Drink viz moy!"

Fethersbee reluctantly extended his hand across the table, and it was grabbed in the gigantic clutch of Dolgonóghi. The little Consul sprawled on the green cloth and received a sounding smack on his shining brow. The company screamed with laughter.

"Look out, Feathers!" cried Vanderlyn. "Remember that a kiss is followed by a blow!"

But Arcadius merely got Fethersbee's head in chancery and put the liqueur to the protesting lips. The Consul had to drink or choke. When released he scrambled down in disgust, mopping his outraged forehead.

"Vot you fazzer name, Sir Fezzersbee?" demanded Dolgonóghi, affably. "Ya vish name you Roosky fashion. Moy fazzer Matvié. Moy name Arcady Matviévich. You say?"

"I'll be damned if I do!" quoth the irate Consul, who had never been heard to swear.

Arcadius turned, as usual, to Vanderlyn for information.

"Vot him fazzer name?"

"It must have been Gun. You see he is such a son of a gun!"

"*Horoshó!* Googe! Gun — zat *Ruzhyó*. Son — zat *vich*. *Ruzhyó-vich!* Vot himself name?"

"My name is Octavius, Mr. Dolgonóghi," interposed Fethersbee, with dignity.

"*Horoshó!* Googe! Octavy *Ruzhyóvich*, moy freend foryever!"

The conviviality continued until Arcadius collapsed after nearly emptying a bottle of curaçao. Vanderlyn packed him into a Chinese coal basket, and he was carried home on a pole suspended between two coolies.

Although nominally out of work, Dolgonóghi still drew his salary, for the mine was really the Tsar's property, and dividends did not matter. The port of Liao-kow was frozen for three months of the year, so that steamers could not approach and mails were sent by overland courier. Arcadius hired a Chinese house on the outskirts of the settlement and furnished it with stock that had long-cumbered the local storekeepers. There were, among this collection, a gaudy Swiss clock that played Chinese tunes every hour, an American harmonium, a baby carriage, a dozen German chromos in gilt frames and a black walnut parlor suite upholstered in red plush. His hospitality was lavish. The smaller foreign communities in China are socially divided into two cliques, generally known as A and B. To the former belong officials, wholesale merchants, the doctor and a stray Anglican missionary. To the latter are relegated ships' officers, storekeepers, tide-waiters and evangelical missionaries. The ladies of clique A, although jealous of one another, are not on visiting terms with the women of clique B. The dinner parties of clique A are arranged strictly by precedence, the senior consul occupying the seat at the right hand of the hostess, while the junior mercantile clerk is far down the board. Such banquets need import no Egyptian skeleton to check their gaiety. After the guests are reassembled in the drawing-room the eldest lady is asked to sing, and

usually responds with "In the Gloaming" or "Love's Old, Sweet Song." The youngest gentleman follows with a recitation of some Kipling ballad in glorification of Thomas Atkins. The rest of the evening is devoted to the insipid parlor games so dear to English hearts. When everybody has been decently bored the gentlemen are consoled with Scotch and soda, and the function is over.

But the feasts of Arcadius set all etiquette at defiance. They began at unheard of hours, and were interminable. There was more to eat and drink at the sideboard than at the table itself. Dolgonóghi was no respecter of persons. He would invite anybody and submit to no refusal. Fethersbee at first resisted, but was privately warned that the Russian was coming for him with the perambulator, and hurried to the house on foot at three in the afternoon. He found a mixed company, consisting of a French bishop *in partibus infidelium*, a Presbyterian Bible agent, the Japanese vice-consul, his own consular constable's family, the bartender of the hotel and others of clique B.

"Ah, Octavy Ruzhyóvich!" exclaimed Arcadius, clasping the little man to his broad breast and kissing him on both cheeks. "'Better nyever late to mend,' say English proverb. You drink? Have *zakouska*!"

Fethersbee passed a wretched afternoon and evening. He had to drink strong waters with his food and smoke black cigarettes between the courses. Dolgonóghi could sing and accompany himself at the harmonium. They were melancholy Russian songs in a minor key that he sang, but he had a superb voice, and the passion with which he rendered them was quite infectious. When Chinese singing girls with their guitars came in at dessert, the Presbyterian *colporteur* and the ladies escaped, but the Jesuit ecclesiastic remained, with his placid, observant smile. Fethersbee made a movement toward the door, but Dolgonóghi anticipated him, and locked it. Finally, when ill and exhausted, though quite

sober, the British Consul was called on to return thanks for a toast to the Queen. He rose, but his legs refused to support him and his tongue to utter the stereotyped sentiments.

"I cannot! I cannot!" he mumbled.

"But moy googe freend, you Kveen's helt! Speech, Octavy Ruzhyóvich!"

"Speech, speech, Mr. Fethersbee!" echoed clique B, delighted at getting the Consul for a boon companion.

"I cannot!" repeated the miserable official.

Dolgonóghi took offense. "You Kveen moy Tsarina grandmozzer. If not speech Kveen, shall speech grandmozzer! Moy feeling hurt!"

But the room suddenly swam before Fethersbee's eyes, and he sank back unconscious. It was a weird procession that fared from the house of Arcadius to that of Octavius. The Consul was fast asleep in the perambulator, that was pushed swiftly along the muddy ruts of the Bund by the huge figure of Dolgonóghi, who chanted a wild Slavonic melody. They were escorted by the men of clique B, shouting and brandishing Chinese lanterns. When the Consular gate was reached, Arcadius delivered his cargo to the porter, and the escort sang "God Save the Queen."

Miss Violet Grey was governess in the family of the Commissioner of Customs. She had seen her thirtieth birthday, and was not beautiful, but she had Mrs. Browning's sonnets by heart. If a white man is stationed long enough at a small place in the Far East he will end by marrying almost anything in sight, but Miss Grey had netted nobody. Arcadius Dolgonóghi came to call, and she immediately fell in love. He was such a magnificent specimen of manhood, so masterful, passionate and romantic, and not too young. He was actually twenty-eight, but looked five years older, with his brown whiskers. He squeezed her hand at a stiff dinner party until the tears came to her eyes, which made his hound-like orbs fill also.

"Mees Grey, vot you fazzer name?" he inquired, earnestly.

"J-J-John J-J-James," stammered the governess.

"Vot youself name?"

"Violet."

"*Horoshó!* Jone—zat Ivan. Violet—one flower—zat *fiálka*. Ya name you *Fiálka Ivanóvna*. Moy name Arcady Matviévich."

Miss Grey blushed. She had never received such advances from a man. The stupid dinner party vanished, and she dreamed of a sleigh ride by moonlight with Arcadius. They were whirling across a vast white plain, and she was wrapped partly in furs and partly in the strong right arm of Dolgonóghi. The dream was, unfortunately, interrupted by the Commissioner's wife, who rose to withdraw and leave her male guests to their tobacco.

"Well, Miss Grey, aren't you coming? or is Mr. Dolgonóghi going to teach you to smoke?"

"Stay, *Fiálka Ivanóvna*, please stay viz moy. Ya give you Roosky cigarette. *Horoshó!*"

"Another time—when we are alone!" murmured the young woman.

The attentions of Arcadius to Violet became a standing joke in the port. He walked with her, taught her—on the sly—to smoke cigarettes, to ride half-broken Tartar ponies on the plain and to skate on the frozen river. He tried to initiate her into the mysteries of the Russian language; but an alphabet that chiefly contains diphthongs and double consonants proved to be too much even for an amorous pupil, from whom, however, he learned to speak more intelligible English, and whom he plied with Muscovite confectionery and Manchurian furs.

In the early Spring she began to look anxious. He had not said anything definite, and had restricted his caresses to her hands. Mrs. Bartow, the Commissioner's wife, while not unwilling to aid her governess in obtaining a matrimonial situation, thought it right to put an end to a mere flirtation.

"My dear Miss Grey," she said, kindly, "you are under my protection here, as I promised your mother you should be. I should fail in my duty if I were to allow Mr. Dolgonóghi to amuse himself at your expense. Are you engaged to him?"

The governess, on the verge of tears, admitted that she was not.

"Then why does he come for you every day? I do not grudge your time, but I really must speak to Mr. Dolgonóghi."

"Oh, please don't! He is very high-tempered and would never come again."

Mrs. Bartow laughed. "Wouldn't he, if he were in earnest? Where is your feminine intuition? If I barricaded the house I could not keep him out."

"I shall surely know this week," said Miss Grey, desperately.

"Very well. I hope you may not be disappointed in him. But I have myself undergone so much of his platonic that I should not be surprised to hear that he had left a wife in Russia."

Violet Grey was shocked at this suggestion and went out into the March air to brace her nerves. As she stepped on the Bund she met Arcadius, looking very impressive in his tall Astrakhan cap and trimmed overcoat.

"Good-morning, *Fiálka Ivanóvna*. I coming for see you."

"That is your usual pastime, is it not?" demanded the governess, sharply.

"My happiness. Life is sorry in Liao-kow. You are my stone-load."

"If you mean a mill-stone about your neck, why don't you throw it off?"

"No, no! I mean magnet. You draw me like stone-load draw needle."

"A needle is not safe to play with. I think I will leave it alone in future."

"What for, *Fiálka Ivanóvna*? My feelings are very warm to you."

"Have you not rather cheap feelings? You advertise them so much that their quality cannot be of the best."

"'Good bird need not bush,' say Anglish proverb. You are cross. What for? Zis is Rossian Easter Day. Not must be cross. Tell me 'Christ is rose.'"

The governess proved stronger than the woman. "Christ is risen," she corrected. He bent forward and kissed her forehead, saying, "He was risen indeed."

She glanced around to see whether there were witnesses, but only a few natives were on the Bund.

"You had better go and speak to Mrs. Bartow."

"I will speak. Is she to home?"

"I have just left her."

"Wait to me, please."

He looked so wistful and handsome as he entered the Commissioner's house that she felt suddenly happy and confident. But he emerged in a few moments with an air both perplexed and annoyed.

"Mrs. Bartow very cross. She tell me go away, not come back no more."

"Why, what did you say to her?"

"I tell her it is Rossian Easter. She must tell me 'Christ is risen.' She tell me. I kiss her. She not like, say tell her husband. I say 'Tell him, I kiss too him.' She say, 'Go away! get out!'"

"You are a brute, and I hate you."

"What for, Fiálka Ivanóvna?"

"You would kiss anybody. Why, she is forty if she is a day! Did you tell her that you had just kissed me?"

"No. What for?"

Violet stamped her foot and rushed indoors, where she locked herself in her room and found relief in tears. Arcadius walked sadly to the club, where he was unusually emotional, drank maraschino from a tumbler, and gave everybody an affectionate Easter greeting.

For several weeks he saw nothing of Miss Grey. She would not stir from the house, but devoted herself to her pupils. This kept her imagination off the sleigh ride. But the days were dreary without Arcadius, and she grew dyspeptic for lack of exercise. Then a note was handed

to her which proved to be from him, and read as follows:

FIÁLKA IVANÓVNA GREY.

DEAR—I wish for see you. Not can come house. I wish make propose for you. Where can meet to you? Please come walk Bund to day 5 of clock.

Your

ARCADY MATVIÉVICH DOLGONÓGHI.

She burned the note, with a sigh. Mrs. Bartow and her husband were riding bicycles on the plain. At a quarter past five, while she was having afternoon tea in the nursery with the children, the Chinese butler brought a card to the nursery, and close behind him came its owner, Arcadius, beaming, with his hands full of parcels. There were caramels and walnut paste for the children, who were kissed and bribed to go into the garden. Violet was severely dignified.

"Mrs. Bartow is out," she said, "and I was not receiving."

"Pardon, Fiálka Ivanóvna. You not answer at my letter. 'Silence is gold consent,' say Anglish proverb. I hurry. You not happy. I make propose for you."

Here he took her hand and retained it while seating himself. Miss Grey stood limply looking out of the window.

"I go home for Rossia when port open. I go first steamer for Shanghai. How much Mrs. Bartow pay you?"

The governess winced and tried to disengage her hand.

"What business is it of yours, Mr. Dolgonóghi?"

"My business quite all right, Fiálka Ivanóvna. I pay you plenty more zan her. You go for Rossia wiz me."

She became quite faint. "I do not understand you, Mr. Dolgonóghi."

He fumbled in the pocket of his overcoat.

"You loave children. I loave, too. I have. Zey not speak Anglish. I get letter of my wife. She wish governess. See at picture."

He released her hand and finally produced the photograph of a handsome but anemic blonde, with three small boys who were images of himself. He kissed the picture and offered it to Miss Grey, who suddenly regained her calmness and examined it with indifference.

"You must have married young," was her remark.

"I marry twenty-one. I have twenty-eight. My wife very good, very pious. She nobleman daughter. My fazzer meat merchant at Tver. She loave me. Her fazzer say 'No!' She run away wiz me in sleigh. Long way, very cold; plenty wolf. Horse fall down, sleigh stop. What I make? I kill, I kill!"

Violet shuddered. How often had he committed murder and matrimony?

"I very strong. Pistol empty. I have big whip. I kill one, two, three, four wolf. Ozzer wolf eat zemself, eat horse. I take wife at shoulder. I run one, two, three, four mile for village."

Miss Grey was thrilled, in spite of herself.

"You must be very strong."

"My fazzer more strong zan me. He meat merchant. He kill buck—what Anglish name, bull?—wiz fist!"

"Your wife does not look strong."

"Not strong. She not can forget wolf. Lie down, plenty lie down. Not take care children. I loave her very. She wish Anglish governess. I wish you go for her. She loave you."

"I cannot leave Mrs. Bartow, Mr. Dolgonóghi. My engagement is not completed, and I fear, besides, that I should not like Russia."

"Not like? You loave Russia! My wife make you loave. Come wiz me."

At this point Mr. and Mrs. Bartow entered the room. Of course they were startled, but Miss Grey was equal to the occasion.

"Mr. Dolgonóghi has just asked me to go with him to Russia to take care of his invalid wife and teach his children. I have declined, with thanks."

Mrs. Bartow at length recovered her breath.

"I should think so, indeed, my dear! Why, Mr. Dolgonóghi, you can get scores of English governesses in Europe without robbing me of mine."

"But my wife not loave zem. I know she loave Fiálka Ivanóvna."

The Commissioner's wife concealed a smile that was, perhaps, no compliment to Violet. But peace was restored, and Arcadius was invited to stay and dine. As usual, he wiped his mouth on the tablecloth.

A fortnight later he left for Shanghai. He took an affectionate but respectful leave of Miss Grey, though his last minutes in Liao-kow were spent at the club, weeping on the necks of his acquaintances, especially the shrinking Fethersbee.

"Octavy Ruzhyóvich," he sobbed, "you not forget! Not all forget! Rossia long way. Rossia not freend wiz Angland. Zey not understand zemself. But you my googe freend!"

And he kissed the little Consul squarely on the mouth. He was finally carried on board his steamer, after numberless glasses of cognac, chartreuse and green mint.

If Fethersbee forgot, Violet Grey did not. She had met her ideal in the flesh, and it seemed unattainable. But who feels the subtle finger touch of Fate? A year later she received a pathetic letter from Arcadius, wherein he told her of his wife's death from consumption soon after his arrival, leaving him with a big country house and three boys who were running wild. Their mother's family was too proud to take them and Arcadius into the bargain. The family influence had procured the butcher's son his Manchurian post, and his safe return had been unwelcome. The letter enclosed a large cheque, and begged "Fiálka Ivanóvna" to marry the writer and rule his household. He offered to come across Siberia, if necessary, to fetch her.

Mrs. Bartow cynically observed that there might be many a landslip betwixt Tver and Liao-kow. But Violet Grey did not hesitate. She

went at once, and she is perfectly happy with her great barbarian husband. She has one little girl, and her husband's boys adore their step-

mother. She has made him a teetotaler, but it is said that she has never quite succeeded in keeping the kisses of Arcady to herself.



AT THE TELEPHONE

“YES, this is 244; yes, this is Miss Jennings. . . . Oh, how do you do? . . . Very well, thank you. . . . I beg your pardon! I am afraid you forgot yourself. What did you say? Oh—well, really I—I . . . Very busy; in fact, my time is precious; I have none at all to waste. . . . Well—perhaps a few minutes. . . . Really, it is quite immaterial to me. . . . No; I think not. . . . In fact, I am sure of it. . . . No—no—you must not. . . . I forbid you, really. . . . Oh, of course, it is not impossible. . . . I might not be out, you know. . . . I said I might not be out. . . . O—u—t, out. . . . I guess the connection is poor; we never do understand each other, you know. . . . Well, don't blame everything on Central; perhaps you—or I—are to blame some. I only said the connection might be poor; we all have poor connections, you know. . . . No, I said ‘out’—yes, I hear almost everything you say. I always have understood you better than you do me. . . . What is the matter? . . . Can't understand? . . . I only said that if you called I might not be out, after all. . . . No—‘not be out.’ . . . I might not. . . . No—not ‘be out,’ but ‘might not be out.’ . . . Isn't it funny? . . . You can't hear a word? I guess she's cutting us off. Hello! hello! Oh, is it you? Yes, 244. . . . I would much rather, though, be number 1. . . . Well—perhaps—on conditions. . . . No, quite impossible; I could not trust you. . . . N—o, I must ring off now; good-bye. . . . I said ‘good-bye.’ . . . No, not good boy—good-bye. . . . Yes, I really must. . . . Indeed I must. . . . Well, I really oughtn't to. . . . I do forgive you, too. . . . Oh, did you really think I was to blame? Hello! hello—I thought we were cut off sure, then. Yes, perhaps I was, too—a little. . . . I am willing to, over the ‘phone. . . . I said over the ‘phone. . . . Yes, kiss and make up—over the ‘phone. . . . As the children do—no! never! only children, you know. . . . I positively can't see you. . . . N—o, not so very busy. . . . Yes—I—do like you—some. . . . Oh, I couldn't. . . . No, never. . . . Perhaps, sometime. . . . Oh, no—no, indeed. . . . Well—I don't know. . . . I said I didn't know. . . . Of course, I do know. . . . Well—perhaps. . . . Oh—I couldn't. . . . Well, yes, I could, of course. . . . I—do—mean it—too. . . . Really? . . . Perhaps—yes. . . . Well, ‘yes,’ then. . . .”

LUE ELLEN TETERS.



THE PLAIN INFERENCE

MABEL—I wouldn't marry the best man in the world.

CARRIE—You must be engaged to some fellow who has money.

THE SEA-VOICE

BEYOND the sands I hear the sea-voice calling
 With passion all but human in its pain,
 While from my eyes the bitter tears are falling,
 And all the Summer land seems blind with rain;
 For out within those waters, cruel, changeless,
 She sleeps, beyond all rage of earth or sea;
 A smile upon her dear lips, dumb but waiting,
 And I—I hear the sea-voice calling me.

The tide comes in. The moonlit flood and glory
 Of that unresting surge thrill earth with bliss,
 And I can hear the passionate, sweet story
 Of waves that waited round her for her kiss.
 Sweetheart, they love you—silent and unseeing;
 Old ocean holds his court around you there,
 And while I reach out through the dark to find you
 His fingers twine the seaweed in your hair.

The tide goes out, and in the dawn's new splendor
 The dreams of dark first fade, then pass away;
 And I awake from visions soft and tender
 To face the shuddering agony of day.
 For out within those waters, cruel, changeless,
 She sleeps, beyond all rage of earth or sea;
 A smile upon her dear lips, dumb but waiting,
 And I—I hear the sea-voice calling me.

KATHERINE LA FARGE NORTON.



THE SECRET OUT

SHE—Why is it men so seldom marry their first love?

HE—Because, I suppose, it is so much more fun to marry some other fellow's first love.



FOURTH OF JULY FIREWORKS

WASHINGTON blazes on his horse
 Against the black, black night,
 Because in the country's darkest day
 He was its brightest light.

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.

A LOST LINE

By Julien Gordon

(Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger)

AS the Contessina trailed her languid airs—thus the Contessa, her terrible mother-in-law, called them—up the Cascine walk, the passer-by, who met her daily, noticed that she was sad.

A pretty, *chic* woman's melancholy is cause for question; if occupying, it is rarely convincing. After all, "to be" is the essential; the Contessina *was*. There were those who thought it enough.

About many persons there is an element of the *décousu*; they seem constructed of shreds and patches; their attributes, like their moods, do not hang together—touch, but do not adhere. One felt with this particular lady a sense of finish, of completion, of fitness; she said and did no slovenly things; her harmonious manner struck one as a gift. Manners, no doubt, can be developed, but there is a grace that springs only from an engaging personality; its forced imitations produce discomfort.

Her compatriots said of the Contessina that she was very "foreign," while the Italians looked on her with that indulgence with which we approach a rare flower successfully transplanted. She therefore held the allurements of exoticism in her own and her adopted country. At eighteen, during a Winter sojourn in Florence, she had met and married her Count. She had made the Palazzo Grazia her home ever since. She occupied her *étage* alone. Her husband had died some years before—with his idle habits, perfect good humor and exacting demands on her American income. He passed the

larger part of his time standing at the doors of his club, twirling his mustache, gaping at the pretty American and English women who stop at Doney's or Giacosa's to take tea and eat little cakes—ladies at whom the Florentine dames glance with a mixture of haughtiness and envy, raising their lorgnons as they pass in their gay equipages.

The Cascine presented its usual appearance on this particular Spring morning. Showers had washed its damp, dark paths, and the tiny stones of the gravel sparkled as if spangled with jewels. Handsome officers, brave in their smartly fitting uniforms, pranced on the horseback trail; pretty misses and matrons smiled at them as they galloped by, escorted by husbands and brothers, or followed by breeched and booted grooms. The Princess Platoff's fat coachman and horses were drawn up as usual in a shady angle, while she plodded to the Piazzone with praiseworthy energy. A pale, red-lipped *horizontale* dragged her skirts with a "swish" over the moist earth, calling to her *cocchiere* to meet her a mile further, at the monument of the Rajah of Kohlapore. The Viale del Re was almost deserted, except for half a dozen private broughams and victorias and their occupants. The indefatigable tourist was also out in his cab; but it is the later afternoon hour that brings the crowd. Here and there a bicyclist clove the wind, whirled quickly through the leafy shade. From silent crypts the plant world had burst into bloom. The night flowers were spreading their petals to

the sunlight, from which flew away such insects as love the dusk. The rhythmic pulses of the Spring beat in the young woman's heart.

Just because others rode their horses or their bicycles, or lay back lazily in carriages, she chose to walk; although when the desire or fever was on her she, too, loved the mad-cap run to the rally hunt, and to spin her wheel among the hills. Yes, she was sad—as sad as if it were a Summerless polar sea about her instead of this eternal festa of bird song, beauty and warmth.

Her little truffle-nosed dog ambled behind her, held in his long, loose leather leash, tortured into harness and muzzle. As she walked she heard the rumble of wheels behind her, and from out a small coupé a gentleman sprang. "Sprang" is a strong word. The Prince, albeit robust, was not exactly agile. He was an elderly man, quite old enough to be the Contessina's father. He was dressed with scrupulous elegance, and wore violets in his buttonhole. The meeting was cordial. He swung himself into her slow step. She expected the usual reproaches. Why did she make him ridiculous? Why did she humiliate him? To all Italian vanity exists this one terror—to become absurd to the looker on. He has gauged the curiosity and sarcastic humor of his nation. He has not yet recognized that no one can make us ridiculous but ourselves.

To the unsophisticated, declamation is eloquence, gesture emphasis, hysteria emotion. In Italy one meets the real things. The dramatic is not an acquired trick, but an instinct of the blood. Generally, as he spoke, the Prince waved his hands, his entire body vibrated, while the words fell quickly from his lips; but to-day he appeared calmer, colder, more silent. He was a Roman noble. He had pursued her with his passion now for two years. Why did the Contessina, on her part, meet him on this sweet morning with the Arno's tide at their side and the rustling foliage over them, less indifferently than usual?

Returning from the opera late and sleepy, she had nevertheless not neglected those nightly rites of all women who respect their loveliness. She had plunged into her perfumed bath, been rolled in soft flannels and rubbed by her hand-maidens; her brown hair had been combed and shaken; sweet smelling creams had been lightly daubed on her cheeks; her hands and nails had then been cared for; also her gleaming little teeth; and all wrapped in her down *peignoir*, she had drunk a cup of warm milk at her bedside. Then her women had left her.

She had felt restless and wide awake again with the flush and stir of her ablutions. She had drawn to her toilette table, sat down before it, raised the crystal lamp and looked at herself. Her eyes became fastened on one particular portion of her face—her chin. From this they wandered to the contour of her throat. They gloomed. Even the Contessa, her detested mother-in-law, had always admired her throat and chin. Their line had been, perhaps, the younger woman's essential claim to beauty. Could it be a shade across the mirror that affected her own vision, or was she—withering? That suave sweep—where was it tonight? There could be no doubt of it; the lower half of her face was thickening, squaring a little, was less firm, a trifle worn. She had never noticed this before. She fell a-wondering if others had—other women.

Tolstoï tells us this carcass is but a spade we should be glad to destroy in digging to reach the hidden spark of the spirit. In certain moods we are commendably inclined to agree with him; yet, alas! the fact remains that, given our present crude civilization, religion, whether viewed as a large idea or a private consolation, offers a woman little balm for the loss of her youth and personal charm. This loss remains one of the greatest tragedies of life—a tragedy none the less terrible because met in silence and accepted with smiles.

To the Contessina, who loved all

beauty, her own was dear. She shivered.

One thing was certain. The Prince, who had sat close to her in her *loge* the night before, had particularly complimented her on her shoulders as they rose from the severity of her pink velvet gown. His eyes had dwelt complacently for a moment on the tip of her little ear, to wander to where it met the curve of her proud cheek. Had he—seen? She had slept, and dreamed, and forgotten. But on rising early she had made another examination, and now she was—sure. She was changing! With this poignant discovery clutching her heart she had come forth to meet the day.

The Prince was not feeling amiable. His estates had failed to bring in their usual semi-annual revenue; so his intendant wrote to him. He half-suspected the man of lying. The crops had been excellent, the olives abundant, the straw-pleating had flourished—why, then, was the income diminished? The explanations were incoherent and feeble; the master felt justly suspicious and indignant. Possibly younger men know no such distractions to the pains of love. But this gentleman was not young, and his disposition of mind threatened complication. The lassitude of a sleepless night, nay, possibly of his years, lay on him. Once, indeed, when the Contessina addressed him his attention was wandering. The young woman noted this with peculiar anxiety. It was the first time in all her life that she had spoken to any man whose eyes had moved away from her lips as she did so. The first time! And this was the slave, the dog she had amused herself treading on and had made the butt of her railleries for all these months! He must have seen! A sense of cold crept over her, and she pushed up the fluff of lace that encircled her neck. She reflected that in street costumes, at least, she might still be passable. She set traps for him.

“What did you think of La Favola’s

figure? Is she not too stout?” The Prince had not remarked the diva’s *embonpoint—du reste*, she was not his style; he did not admire her.

“Do you think she would look better if she wore one of those modern jeweled collars, instead of appearing *la gorge nue?*”

He was not deeply interested in the question. Then, desperately, she asked him how he had liked her own pink frock. Still reflecting on his steward’s perfidy, the Prince answered in vague terms of gallantry, a perfunctory assurance that left her uneasy.

“You thought, then,” she persisted, lightly tapping the gravel with her parasol, “that I was *en beauté* last night—really?”

He stopped, smiling into her eyes.

“Always beautiful to me.”

“And so—without ornaments, without my pearls, as I was? Like a young girl? My throat . . .”

He liked her pearls, yes, still—she was *bellissima* with or without them.

They paused and sat down where the pyramidal fountain hides under the black trees the record of a lover’s fate:

*Eterno monumento in questo loco
Generosa pietà fonde a Narcisso
Che vaggiando al Fonte il proprio viso
Mori consunto d’amoroso fuoco.*

She watched him closely—the fine, bony structure of the brow and nose, so common to well-born Italians. The mouth, once so perfect, still sweet under its waxed mustache, with that strange sweetness which defies the accidents of change, the blight of years; the grizzly, close-cropped hair and those kindly eyes, that melted into softness when they gazed at her. How often had he told her that he owed her the debt no life is long enough to pay, because she had given him back his youth—his youth, and its lost dream! And she had laughed and clapped her hands, and he had caught them in his own, kissing them, calling her “my little girl,” and she

had felt the abyss between them of the years that separate. To-day, somehow, the distance seemed far less. She examined the network of wrinkles at his temples and beneath his eyes, marked that when he laughed it could be seen one of his fine teeth was missing, noted that his cheeks were worn and lined. And these signs of age in him that she had so disliked, and even ridiculed, suddenly struck her with a profound pathos; a curious wish to weep, and weep, and weep, folded closely in his arms just for a moment, for the first time invaded her. Yet never had he seemed less ardent. The reserve that the public promenade imposed seemed to chill him into a certain severity of attitude, that strict convention with which the Florentine protects a woman's reputation, even when trifling with her honor. To this adorer the Contessina's honor was as dear as her good name.

She wished he would clasp her hand a moment where it lay idly on her knee, for they were quite alone ex-

cept for a workman stretched sleeping on one of the stone benches. But he went on sucking the end of his cane, absent-minded, irritable.

"Are you going to the ball at the Corsini's?"

"Yes, if you are."

"Ah, I am getting too *passée* for balls!"

He stared. "You?—*passée*?"

Unexpectedly her eyes filled. "Yes, really, really. I think I shall hereafter abjure *décolleté*."

All distraction had fled now. He leaned suddenly forward and touched her chin with his gloved finger.

"What! *carina*, hide that exquisite little throat from the eyes of your poor old lover? become a nun?" he laughed. "Ah!" She gave a cry, her head rolled back against the dark tree trunk.

"Ah, Carl, dearest, dearest Carl, I *love* you!"

He sat speechless—dazed with his ecstasy, staring at her, astonished, humbled.

He never understood.



LIFE'S MASQUERADE

YOUTH cried, "Ah, Life, it breaks my heart to gaze
 Into thy face, and find thee—what thou art!
 I fondly dreamed while still thou playedst thy part
 In mask and cloak, in this great play of plays—
 Seeing thee through the dim, delicious haze
 Of hope and happiness—that my young heart
 Would be unsatisfied till power to start
 Thee from thy gay disguise were mine. As prays
 The little child, half-lisping, on his knee
 For manhood's strength and manhood's unknown power,
 So prayed I, Life of mine, to see thy face,
 And thou hast turned at last—God pity me!—
 Without thy mask, and in this one brief hour
 I loathe thee as I stand in thy embrace!"

ETHEL M. KELLEY.



SINCERE SYMPATHY

HE—I'm not living with my father-in-law any more.
 SHE—Well, I don't blame him.

MRS. MAITLAND'S CORRESPONDENT

By Jane Brevoort Eddy

June, 19—.

MY DEAR MRS. MAITLAND: At last we are settled in our new home in this remote village, and thanks to your kindness, we are very comfortable. Mother hated so much to trouble you with those final bills which you were so good as to *insist* on paying for her. She said, however, that since she came here solely because you advised it, and you knew just how she was situated, she could permit you to do so and yet hold up her head. You knew that what money we had was all used up in our necessary expenses in moving and our daily wants, for none of those mean tradespeople would trust us for anything. That hateful butcher, with whom we traded for years, sent in last year's account six times; and the grocer, who knew dear papa, who had paid him thousands of dollars, persecuted us up to the last minute. When he couldn't get a cent out of us, then he went to you.

Do you know, dear Mrs. Maitland, that we are afraid the old washerwoman that you are now employing is not at all a nice person? She has done our laundry work for years, and, of course, we paid her regularly until six months ago. When we were coming away mamma gave her quite a nice cambric gown. It was a faded old thing, to be sure, that mamma couldn't wear, but it was worth something to old Ann, and I think she was so horrid to go and tell you that we hadn't paid her all Winter. Mamma felt so ashamed!

I am beginning to feel that all poor people—tradesmen and workpeople, I mean—haven't any feeling. Mam-

ma says they fatten on the rich, and really that is just what they do.

But I must stop this tirade and tell you about the house you were so good as to hunt out for us. Mamma says she feels less lonely when she remembers that you own it, and that it helps to reconcile her to living away off here. You said yourself it was but a plain cottage—built for your gardener, wasn't it?—but it is on the main road to the village, and we thought that would take away the terribly, terribly lonely feeling we have whenever we recall that we are living in the country and know nobody.

Mamma thinks it queer that not a soul has come to call on us, but perhaps it is just as well as long as we are to live so plainly. Still, you know, one does want to speak to somebody, and it was so different in New York. Who would dream that only seventy-five miles could bring us into such a wilderness! *There*, no matter where or how you live, you can go out and see people. I think again and again with delight of the tea you sent me to in your gray crepon. That dollar I had kept to give to Ann I spent on two roses, and they looked so lovely I couldn't feel sorry for Ann, who was in the dumps because I had promised her a dollar toward her rent. But there, one doesn't go to a tea every day, and as you were so kind as to send me, you were responsible for it, my dear friend (I love to call you that!) and so, after all, it wasn't so dreadful that you had to pay Ann in the end; it was a sort of just debt, wasn't it?

What wouldn't I give if you could

only see mamma now, sitting in "the wreck"—that's what I call our parlor, for you know half of our furniture, which you were so kind as to send out to us prepaid by freight, came to pieces. Mamma likes the old stuff because it shows we've had "a family," and so she sits, and cries and glues alternately. It looks horrid now, but maybe we can fix it up. Mamma snooped in the closet at the big house, where you told her some things were stored away that we might make use of, and found an old Turkey rug that she spread over the sofa. It is worn, but the colors are rich, and the curtains are not half so bad as we thought them, now that they are hung. But she says: "Please tell dear Mrs. Maitland—" you know mamma loves you so—"to think how it must seem to *me* to be living here in this poky country place, in this mechanic's cottage, and to feel that I must count every penny, and then she'll pity me, for after all's said and done, she got me to come here."

Mamma and I both feel that it was wise, for it will be cheaper than living in New York. There is much less opportunity to spend money, *only*—and this is such a big *only*—as one has nothing to think of to break up the day but just trying, trying, *trying* to make this place look decent if anyone *should* call, and getting one's meals, it's pretty hard to have nothing—nothing whatever—to fix up with.

The pictures you said were piled on the shelves we hunted out, and now they give quite an air to our "best room." Mamma says she would like chromos better, because when the room is darkened they sometimes look like oil paintings if the frames are handsome, but I laugh at her, for of course I know that you wouldn't give us chromos with handsome gold frames—you'd want those yourself—and the dirty old gilt frames look worse than anything. I think these engravings have a more artistic and literary look, like you—I intend this for a compliment—because they are so dull and gray; I should say *quiet*, but I mean

dull *in appearance*, and then are so full of goodness inside, just as you are. I see that they are engravings of Turner's pictures, and I feel sure, because they have that *woozy* look, that people will think they give the room tone.

To go back to mamma's message to you, she says: "Tell her that I sit here amid the ruins of my Lares and Penates—" good heavens!—"and I know that she won't think me grasping, after all she has done for me, if I ask her to send me a roll of matting—two, if it is not asking too much. She need not get anything handsome, but I should like one of those new, large plaid, green patterns—they give so much more style to a room. If she cannot get a dark green, blue will serve. Then, I think that there is only one thing more, and that is brasses for the big open fireplace."

As people furnish now, dearest, brass gives more effect than anything else. You will think that mamma is a regular imposition to ask for all this, after what you have already done for us, but she says she's sure you'll understand, because you know that *ladies* must have things. The big fireplace is perfectly empty and all black with smoke. It looks perfectly awful—like a tomb. Mamma says she'll be much obliged.

And now I am done with begging, my dear, dear Mrs. Maitland. But there's one thing I want you to do for *me*—just me, myself. It's a great big thing, and I'd never have the courage to ask for it as a gift, but the way I'll arrange it you'll see how different it is, and how necessary. You know you said I must give music lessons, and how in the world can I do it without a piano? You said that I must go to my pupils at their homes, but I never could walk from one house to another, and it would cost as much for carriage hire as for a piano. Besides, if the pupils come to me and take their lessons on my piano, then I can practice on it and improve myself.

I feel sure that I can soon earn enough to pay for one, and all that I ask from you is to pay the first cost,

and let me refund it in small sums as I am able. I will begin to teach just as soon as I can get any pupils. It will be so much better for me to owe you the money than to rent a piano and allow the rent to go toward the purchase.

I had a friend who tried to buy a piano on the instalment plan, and after she had paid the rent for a year and a half she found that there was still as much to pay as if it were a new piano, and it was two years old and getting decidedly second-rate in tone. It wasn't a very good piano, anyway, but such a one would be good enough for me—all I should expect, for I should never have the presumption to suggest your getting me a very high-priced one. I should try to scold you if such an idea entered your head in spite of what I say, for you know how I *love* a fine piano, and what my music is to me, and it would be just like you to go and order the best there is for me.

Mamma says that I am wasting all my time writing you such a screed, that I am a lazy girl, and that it will bore you. But I know that you will bear with me, because you feel so sorry for us.

I still have to thank you for that last little gift you made me. It was too sweet, the way you did it! I opened the box of chocolates on the train, and when I saw your note in the top I cried out: "Why, mamma, what can Mrs. Maitland be writing to me about? I said good-bye to her yesterday, when she gave me this." I tore open the note, and then, I tell you, I felt like a girl who has been kissed (please don't think me horrid because I said that—it's only a joke) when I saw a ten-dollar bill folded in among the leaves of your pretty note paper! The very first money I earn I am going to use to get some note paper just like yours. So you know now how much I admire it.

You will think me very mercenary, but I must tell you in confidence that if I could marry as rich a man as your husband I'd take anybody—any old thing.

Your devoted, ever loving

LILY.

II

August.

MY DEAREST MRS. MAITLAND:

What have you thought of me—*naughty me!*—when you did not hear from me for a whole month? But you will understand when I tell you all. I never mean to keep back anything from you, for you have done so much for us, and we never could have got along even as well as we have but for you.

Mamma says that she thinks ever so much more of your thoughtfulness than of your generosity, for you are so rich that you can give without any self-denial. It must be lovely to be so rich! You have everything that you want, and the few things that I make such a fuss about are only like the scraps from the rich man's table to you.

I am so much younger than mamma that I can't look at it just her way. I suppose we change as we get older. I am just as devoted to you as I can be, and I think you were awfully good to send me the piano. That was six weeks ago, and I have meant to write to you every day since to tell you about it, but—things have happened.

In the first place, I'll make my little confession. And try not to think I'm horrid, for I'm sure you'd rather have me truthful and honest about it than to have me flatter you by telling you I was altogether pleased.

Of course the piano is useful to have, and I know it was a good deal for you to send me, although it was an old-fashioned one of your own that you had left up here—not at all like the lovely grand you have in the city. But what I wanted was a piano of my own—a fine modern one in a curly-maple case, but I knew that I ought not to expect anything more stylish than a rosewood case, and mamma told me beforehand that she should begrudge every penny you spent on it, and she'd much rather have a big rug for the front hall and for the dining-room.

Poor mamma! she can't get used to matting in the dining-room. She says

that she feels like a dressmaker every time she enters it for a meal. Do dressmakers have matting in their dining-rooms? I never noticed, if I ever was in one.

Revenons nous à notre piano—old proverb! Then I was mad at mamma for talking so selfishly, and I said, "If Mrs. Maitland sends me a piano of any kind I shall be both delighted and surprised, and you had better be, too, mamma, for remember that it means our bread and butter, which I am to earn."

I spoke very earnestly, for I was terribly afraid she might write to you and tell you how she felt. I must have said something about wanting a maple one, for mamma is such a tease, and just as she always will when I am put to the blush, she laughed right out when the old square piano, with the mahogany case, marched in from the big house.

Your man was too funny for anything as he placed the old high-backed tapestry window chair in front of it, and said: "I hed pertikeler orders, ma'am, to bring de shtool wid it, an' dere dey bote is, an' Missis Maitland's compliments, an' here's de bit of silk for de top decoration, ma'am."

The silk was beautiful to spread over the old-fashioned case, which really does look most unsightly in our little room, but I am very much obliged to you all the same.

Perhaps I shall have to thank you in the end for much more than the old piano, for it has surely brought me luck. It has turned out just as mamma said—your thoughtfulness is better than your generosity, though you don't mean it so. Anyhow, since then mamma and I always call the piano cover "the top decoration."

I am writing too much about this, when I have so much else to tell you; but I could not bear that you should think me careless and forgetful.

The piano has been very useful to me, for I have six little pupils. I hate to teach, but I'd get along all right if I only dared to ask higher prices for the lessons. The mothers are very

good to me, and I don't want to offend them.

Mrs. Chisholm gave me a dotted white muslin gown one day. It was fresh material and fitted me quite well, but the sleeves are the old-fashioned shape, and the skirt is not full enough. Next, Mrs. Draper handed over to me her eldest daughter's last Summer's blue denim yachting suit and *hat*. I was so glad of this last, for I hadn't any hat that was really stylish. She was very nervous and apologetic when she asked me would I take the things, and tried to say that the gown did not fit her daughter, but I told her simply that I did not mind one bit, and that if I could wear them I would. Inwardly I was sure she gave the gown away because it was last year's style, and Katherine Draper wouldn't wear it. When I got home I measured the skirt—only four yards round the bottom! Mamma knew how to cut it over and give it a flare, and it is really fetching now.

I pose as Maud Muller all the time. That is, I mean, I don't try to be fine; I just wear muslins and a sailor hat, and look gentle, and everyone seems to take to me. I am beginning to think it really does a person good to live in the country, at any rate in Summer. I know I never could stand it in Winter.

You did so much to make me feel happy in this stupid place, and youth has done the rest. Mamma says I must always remember that now I have that in my favor; I am young. She says: "Wait till you're old, Lily, at least until you have seen as much trouble as I have—that is what makes one feel old—and you'll know how hateful the country can be."

But mamma's always just that way. So gloomy! so retrospective! so tired of it all! I know one thing—when I'm as old as she is I won't be asking anybody—no, not even you, my dear, dear Mrs. Maitland—for anything. *Somebody* will be giving me all I want, or rather, I shall take what I want, and *somebody* will be only too happy to pay for it all. So much

good, at any rate, my good looks and my youth shall do for me.

Now you'll think that I need another lecture, and that I'm a harum-scarum thing and haven't taken to heart all the lovely, good advice you wrote me in your last letter. The truth is, my dear, true friend—I love to think you're that, and I know you are all the time—as I read your letter I saw that there was a whole page of goody-goody coming, so I put that page aside to study at my leisure, and—would you believe it?—the wind must have blown it into the scrap-basket or something, for I have never seen it again from that day to this. Of course, then, I didn't read it, and so I'm just as bad as ever. I know you're sorry for me, but of course you can't realize what a temptation life is when one is poor. It is easy to be good, to be real, religiously good when one is rich. It is so nice to help others and to put in stained glass windows and all that. Well, this may come to me in the future, the grand, glorious future. Who knows?

I shall plunge right in now and tell you what has happened. In the words of the song, "*I'm in love, I'm in love, as you all can plainly see,*" and it's Charley Richards. He's just a dear! He comes four times a week to take a music lesson, and he says he *absorbs* it, for he won't strike a note. He makes me play and sing to him, and he says it's worth two dollars a night to him. Really, Mrs. Maitland, though it sounds silly to say so, he is my best and most devoted pupil, and his love for music brings me in quite a nice income. So I forgive the piano, after all, for being so ugly and, if it won't hurt your feelings, let me say a little wheezy, and I'm just as thankful as I can be for the wisdom of your advice when you told me not to refuse any pupil, no matter who it might be.

Mamma says that she'll have to make out a regular litany of thanksgiving for all the things you have sent her. "*For all the pease and beans and beets we thank you, Mrs. Maitland. For the eggs and chickens, for*

the strawberries and currants, for the paper novels, and all the general utility articles, we thank you, Mrs. Maitland," and so on. But truly, dearest, we do appreciate every little thing, even the smallest. Mamma often tells me that the things I think are big seem small enough to you, surrounded as you are by every luxury. I like to think that you have everything. And all I can do is to amuse you once in a while with my chatter. If I were near you I could run in to see you, and then I could tell you all my silly little longings, but I am ashamed to write the half of them on paper. If you had ever said one word that sounded as if I had gone too far I'd shut up tight, but you are never carried away by my enthusiasms, and I know that I need not be afraid of being troublesome, for I feel sure that you will snub my extravagance when you think you ought to.

If I could have a Leghorn hat trimmed with ragged sailors, and a pair of white gloves, elbow length, and a deep-rose-pink sash, I'd think my good angel had heard my prayers. You know that the 10th of September'll be my birthday. But really I'm not hinting; I don't mean *you*, you dear thing!

My shoes are the worst. All the girls have those lovely yellow ones, and they don't cost much—not for other people, but it seems, oh, so much to poor little me!

Your loving

SILLY LILY.

P. S.—Charley Richards is a gentleman of leisure. He doesn't do a thing, but he has great musical taste, and he may compose some day. He has big black eyes with dark circles under them, and tangley lashes, and his hair tumbles down on one side of his head like Clyde Fitch's, and he wears coarse plaid golf stockings and horribly ugly knickers that are awfully swell, and best of all, he can't even *pretend* to say his r's. He's rich! I don't mean he has money, for he hasn't a cent, though he does pay so well for his music lessons; but he is just what

he ought to be to charm a girl and make her have a nice time. That's what I mean by rich.

Oh, life is meant for the young, but I wish somebody'd tell me why there is never any money in it till you're old! Charley says his father's in Australia, and he never speaks of his mother. He's staying at an elegant place on the hill that he calls "The Shanty." He vows he does not possess a penny himself, but of course his father is wealthy enough for half a dozen, and if he'd die and get out of the way I'd marry Charley in a minute. I know he'd ask me then. He hasn't yet—as things are. I hope that you don't think I'm bold to tell you all this.

III

September.

MY OWN DARLING MRS. MAITLAND:

I write to you with a full heart after my six weeks of silence. I have not been idle, I assure you, and the news I have for you will astonish you and make up to you for any neglect or selfishness on my part heretofore. I keep saying to myself, "Remember, Lily, how fortunate you are—how happy you are going to be," and all the rest of it; and when I am not saying this myself mamma is saying it to me.

Here, indeed, I can find happiness, I think; for mamma is like a different woman. Unless you could see her face to face you could not believe that a peep into the changed future could make such a difference in her. She never has a word of whining now or a word of reproof for me. Yet she might have felt aggrieved under the circumstances, for—how I laugh as I write it!—mamma and I seemed to be rivals at one time. At least, she thought so. I always knew.

When she found out the truth she only said: "Well, it was not at all strange that I was deceived, my dear, for it would have been much more appropriate, and I should have felt it my duty to think only of your future

and well-being. It is a great relief to me, I assure you, to have it settled otherwise, and to know that you are contented."

I think it was good of her to let me off so easily, for if she had married Mr. Richards she could have bossed me worse than ever; and you know how I hate that.

To know that I am contented—that is what mamma said. Am I? All girls are mysterious creatures, aren't they? And I am a sensible girl. The type is rare, I suppose, and so I must pay the price for being different from the majority. That is the way I feel. One has to choose, and I can conscientiously say that I think I have done what was best.

Charley is a dear. That is what I have always thought. If his father were old enough to die soon, why, I might take Charley, though that would be foolish, too, if I hadn't long to wait. I told Charley that one of the chief inducements was having him around all the time, but he wasn't nice about it. He talks cynically and sneeringly, and makes fun of his poor, dear papa, who is hardly ever silly, and really wonderfully good to Charley. It seems almost like a slur on me to say the things he does; but I know that of all men Charley could never intend to reflect in an uncomplimentary way on my conduct.

When Charley's father came home so unexpectedly no one was prepared to see him, and when I met him I had no idea that he was old Mr. Richards. He looks about sixty-five and he is—well, *portly*. His skin is ruddy and his hair is fuzzy and white, and so are his little choppy whiskers. He is short and has nice little hands and feet. He is particularly fresh and clean-looking. So you see, after all, he's not half-bad.

Ah, me! Sometimes I don't know what I'd do if it wasn't for buying my gorgeous trousseau, and wandering over Chiselmede, which is what I have named my new home that Charley so absurdly calls "The Shanty." Mr. Richards will let me refurnish it, but he says that I'll enjoy it more if I do

it gradually; and as the rooms are all very pretty and complete now, I am willing to wait until after we are married.

Married! That dread word is out. The truth is told. You have my news. Yes, my friend, I am to be married, and to the father, not to the son. Charley never really asked me, and Mr. Richards did, and thinking of mother and my own dull prospects, I took the cat by her heels and settled the matter. For the best, I hope. The cat means my little flirtation with Charley. Poor pussy! she yowled some when I flung her overboard, but I must have some fun while I'm young, and you can't have fun without money. I acknowledge the apparent truth of all your wise words, which were written, no doubt, to make me endure a life of hard work with a possible reward of love-in-a-cottage by-and-bye; but the prospect of old Mr. Wolf growling at the door and shivering Dan Cupid pluming his wings for flight was not enticing. No, thank you, dearest; you haven't tried it, and I have—at least, the first part. I should inevitably nag Charley if I married him on a small income, and I'd hate to lay all my plans for Charley to inherit old Mr. Richards's fortune and then some fine day suddenly find that he had married a young girl, as he'd be sure to do, and that Charley and I were left out in the cold. That would be beastly indeed! You see I have thought it all out and acted with prudence.

Mr. Richards is very fond of young girls, and when we are married and he isn't quite so devoted—he is really *soft* now, you know—why, I think I can have a fine time. Just now it is somewhat wearing.

What a price we women pay for our luxuries! But if one has a sensuous temperament like mine one must have things. Mr. Richards says he loves me for it, and that I shall sit on a tuffet and be fed with strawberries, sugar and cream.

Well, he has begun already. I'm to order my trousseau just how, when and where I like, and he's going to

let me pay for it afterward, when I have the right to dip my hands into his pockets as often as I please. That's what he says. Isn't it good of him? Aren't you glad that I am not going to ask you for a single thing? You have given me more than enough in the days gone by.

I must not omit to tell you that I sent your piano back to your house yesterday, and I said good-bye to all my pupils *as* pupils except Charley. He won't say good-bye, or howd'ye do, or anything, but I don't care if he *is* mad. His father is young enough to get married again if he wants to. He's got all his senses yet, and if he wasn't quite so stout he'd look much younger. He's kind, anyway, and he's rich. I don't believe that Charley'll be a bit better looking when he is as old, and that is the future I'd have if I married him. That's what I told him—in joke, of course; I told him that I was only anticipating my future.

The pink sash and the Leghorn hat were my weapons of war, dear Mrs. Maitland. With these I compelled my fate. Mr. Richards said he never saw anything sweeter or daintier than I was on the morning of the tenth of September, my birthday, as I wandered through the fields picking daisies. He saw me from his window, and came out laughably soon, considering he made such a fine toilet, but he hurried down, fearing he should see me fly away.

He looked quite grand as he came up to me, hat in hand, and most politely asked me all about the place, and the fun is, he knew a great deal more about it than I did.

Charley had gone away that day; he said that he was obliged to go on business, but I was angry with him for leaving me on my birthday, and I flirted desperately with old Mr. Richards as soon as I found out who he was, and we spent the whole day together under the trees and poking about. I let all my music lessons go, and pretended to the children afterward that it was because it was my birthday.

He came to see me every day after that for two weeks. That was the time mother thought he was smitten with her charms, and renewed her youth. How I laugh when I recall the way she dressed up and donned her prettiest manners! But, after all, it did her a lot of good. She continues to look younger, and I tease her all the time about the conquests she will make at my wedding in the beautiful violet velvet gown I have ordered for her.

Oh, friend of my girlhood, your silly Lily knows how to spend money, and life is going to be a grand bazaar for me now every day I live.

I am going to be good, too. I am going to be just the way you were to me when I was poor. I used to hate it sometimes; yes, dearie, *I did!* I can afford to tell you the truth now. I used to think that there was no end to the nice things you might do for me; and I wanted so much that, after all, what you did seemed not much by comparison. Now, however, I realize that one's money is one's own, and not for "daws to peck at." I shall give, but wisely and sensibly—*old* clothes, and ugly things, and things that I wouldn't use myself, like that *bête noire*, your square piano.

I know that in such ways your dependents learn to get along on less than they ever dreamed to be possible, to dress on what would else be stuffed into the ragbag, and so on. Besides, taking pains to think how to teach them to economize makes you seem good to yourself.

My brain works these matters over and over, and mamma says I've settled it all. But I know I have got on to how rich women think and act. It would not be right to give poor people handsome things. Everyone to his own station in life. If a person is not led astray by impulse, but reasons such matters to a conclusion, I am sure one can be generous on very little, and there are so many foolish and pretty, tempting things to spend money for that no matter how rich

one may be there's a use for all one's money.

When I think about all this, then I am happy, but when I see Charley, then I am blue. It will be different when I see him every day. When I'm his father's wife he'll have to be nice to me, and respectful, too. He won't dare then to scold me, for I can make his father shut down on Monsieur's allowance. That will be fun!

As for you, I shall always remember that you almost drove us into the country, where I met my fate. You made me give music lessons, which brought Charley to me, and no marriage can ever blur the memory of those most harmonious lessons. You sent me the sash and hat that made me look "so baby sweet." I quote the words of my antique lover. He is so silly sometimes! A great sort of baby I am!

If you could only come to my wedding my triumph would be complete, but you will have gotten back in time to see me in New York in the Winter, anyway, and then I can tell you all the ins and outs of the whole affair. They make quite a novel. You see I have some romance left in me, for all I am so wise.

I shall have a quiet wedding, in one sense, for I am sending out invitations to the church only. But it will take place in New York, and I shall ask every rich person I ever met, to show them I can be grander—yes, and prettier and more of *everything*—than any of them, and I shall ask every poor person I ever knew—every shabby-genteel person, I mean—because I want to make them envious.

When I trail up the aisle in chiffon and satin, what difference will it make to me that Mr. Richards is to meet me at the chancel instead of— No, I won't say it, for *Charley* never asked me.

Your successful, triumphant, but ever loving

SILLY LILY.

P. S.—I think I might sign myself Wise Lily now.

A DEUCE GAME

By Miriam Cruikshank

“THIRTY—forty—game! A love set! How provoking! Why, I don’t believe you are even looking, Mr. Kemp.”

The girl, a slip of a creature in her first season, pushed back the huge, beruffled sunbonnet that Dame Fashion has decreed shall be *de rigueur* on certain occasions of this year of grace, and looked with half-petulant inquiry at her companion. Before he spoke the man lounging on the turf a few yards away contemplated with the eye of a connoisseur the effect of the tumbled auburn pompadour surmounting her puckered forehead. Then he shook his head.

“I’m not up on games, you know—at least, not that sort. Besides, I had something better to look at.”

An impatient shrug of the shoulders was the girl’s immediate answer to the thinly veiled compliment, and then:

“Miss Lessing plays; she is devoted to tennis.”

“She does—and is. May I trouble you for the connection?”

The critical admiration in his gaze gave place to an expression of challenge. But the girl did not see. She was mutilating the turf with her toe, and the occupation appeared engrossing.

“You and she are awfully good friends,” she said at last.

“You have said it.”

“And yet——”

She hesitated, then colored deeply as she met the look of amused admiration in the eyes opposite.

“And yet——?” he repeated. “What were you going to say?”

“Nothing—that is, I—oh, nothing.”

“Nothing?” Kemp was repeating again—this time absently. His eyes had wandered from the fresh, piquant face before him to the clubhouse, where gaily dressed maids and matrons flitted to and fro on the piazzas overlooking the Hudson, and then to the trim, thickly peopled tennis courts, from which he and his companion were only partly hidden by the low-hanging branches of intervening trees. The amused look had left his face and in its stead had come another—tired, repressed—the habitual expression of the man.

There was nothing extraordinary about Kemp. He was twenty-eight and looked thirty-five. His undecided hair was growing thin over the temples, and his figure and face were those of a man who did not lead a healthy life. Yet he had the reputation of being very “successful” with women. That this reputation—let it count for what it will—was deserved may be taken for granted, since everybody accepted it as truth. He smiled a trifle cynically as he glanced across at the people in the tennis courts and reflected that they were probably even then drawing their conclusions regarding his attitude to the girl near him. Estelle Lessing had said—but what did it matter what Estelle Lessing said? Two people as poor as she and he had no business to know or care what each other said, and he savagely pulled himself from his reverie to meet the indignant gaze of the big hazel eyes under the sunbonnet. He had the grace to appear somewhat confused as he exclaimed:

“Really, I beg your pardon, Miss Morris; did you speak?”

"Only three times; it's of no consequence."

The words ended with a quiver of the lips, and Kemp saw that the dimpled brown hands twisted nervously in the short grass on which the girl had thrown herself during his abstraction. His manner changed.

"I know I appear unpardonable, but—" there was a curious alteration in his voice, something that made her heart beat furiously and brought the warm blood into her rounded, childish cheeks—"but I am going to ask your forgiveness, Miss Madge. The world has been dealing roughly with me lately, and a woman's sympathy, a woman's—friendship, would mean a great deal just now. If I did not hear what you said it was because your presence had made me quietly happy—had helped me to drift away from everything. Between real friends, you know, there can be silence that does not mean boredom. Don't you think so?"

It was hardly as delicately put as he could have wished, but Madge was young, too young to be well versed in the way of a man with a maid. A bald and patchy compliment did not jar on her as it would on some women—Estelle, for instance. She showed signs of softening, and her eyes met his childishly, questioningly.

"I hardly thought you needed my friendship. There are so many others. Miss Lessing is a friend of yours."

"So you remarked before," with a return to something of his former manner.

"Mrs. Hildrup says that you are engaged."

"Mrs. Hildrup is a lady of great discernment—nevertheless, she occasionally makes mistakes."

"Then you and she are not engaged?"

"Mrs. Hildrup and I? The law would interfere. She is not divorced from Jonas, to the best of my knowledge, and he certainly is alive."

"You know perfectly well whom I mean. You and Miss Lessing."

"From her conversation on the drive over here I should judge not."

"You drove over together?"

"Yes."

Silence, long continued, followed. Then the girl spoke again:

"They have all stopped playing."

"Yes?"

"Miss Lessing and Tom have won every set. Tom is my cousin."

"So I understand."

"His father and papa were brothers. Tom was an only child, and has all uncle's money. I—he says he wants to marry Estelle Lessing."

Again the challenging look came into Kemp's face, but it passed quickly, and there was no hesitation in his reply:

"A very proper and worthy desire."

"I told him what Mrs. Hildrup had said, and he swore awfully. Tom has very bad manners, but he is *so* good-looking. I will tell him what you have said, though I don't suppose it will make much difference."

"I suppose not."

"Do you think she would have him?"

"I couldn't say."

"She is very popular, isn't she?"

"Is she?"

"You have known her for a long time?"

"About ten years. You don't remember back that far, do you?"

"I don't see why not. I'm nineteen!"

"As much as that? Really, I had no idea."

"It's not old. Miss Lessing is twenty-four," indignantly.

"Is she? I didn't know. I missed my job on the census—too feeble, they said."

"You are perfectly horrid!" The girl's voice broke and her last word was accompanied by something very like a sob. "You said you wanted me for a friend, and now you do nothing but laugh at me."

"And friends must always be considerate. I'll try to remember. I'm afraid you will think me a bear very often."

"Miss Lessing—"

"Couldn't we leave Miss Lessing out for a little while and talk only

about the partners in this friendship? I want to tell you a little about myself. Will it be such a bore?"

"A bore to hear you talk! How silly you are! But I don't believe you think I understand."

"Oh, yes I do. I'm quite sure of it. But I never was much of a fellow, and hard knocks have eliminated anything that might be attractive to a young girl like you. The story of my life is not a pleasant tale, so let's cut it out. Shall you be here long?"

"Only till next week. Mamma hates the country and only comes here in June to please me. We spend July and August in Newport. Perhaps you will be there for a time."

"Hardly. You seem to have exalted ideas concerning the income of a country lawyer."

"I—I didn't know."

"Naturally. I don't fancy poverty has ever been much in your line."

"Is it very nasty?"

"Very," soberly. "I detest cheese rinds, strong butter and livery horses."

"Now you are laughing at me again."

"I swear it's no laughing matter. I consider my poverty the most serious thing in my life."

"But you won't always be poor."

"I trust you are a prophet, but I fear otherwise. I'm not of the stuff that succeeds."

The girl moved restlessly.

"I suppose we ought to be going. They are all leaving the piazza. Well—that is, shall I see you again?"

She spoke almost coldly, but her heart beat so fast she felt that he must hear it. Her long lashes drooped over the hazel eyes, hiding them entirely.

Kemp rose and came toward her. As they stood facing each other a sudden, mad, uncontrollable impulse seized him, and he took her in his arms.

"Madge," he said, softly, "look at me. Shall I see you again? It all depends on you."

The large, childlike eyes met his fearlessly, frankly, for a moment. "I didn't know you cared," she breathed rather than said, "but I care

awfully." Then the eyelids drooped again and the blood surged over cheek and chin and brow, and she hid her face on his breast.

Kemp stood motionless, one arm round the girl. With his free hand he stroked the soft, tumbled hair. A great wave of pity swept over him—pity for the trembling child who believed in and loved him; pity for himself, though he scarcely deserved it; and then, as another face, older, graver than Madge's, with a mocking light in the big gray eyes and a mouth half-scornful, half-sweet, rose before him, pity for her, if she cared—of that he was never sure. He put his hand under Madge's chin and raised her face level with his own.

"Thank you, dear," he said, simply, and gently kissed her on the forehead, and then, almost hesitatingly, on the lips.

An hour later Kemp and Estelle drove out of the Country Club gates and along the river road. They were among the last to leave. Madge Morris, with flushed cheeks and shining eyes—whose light did not fade even under Miss Lessing's quiet scrutiny and her Cousin Tom's tactless teasing—had departed in her high cart under the latter's escort, quite prepared to sympathize with any rapturous remarks he might wish to make on the subject of Miss Lessing. Tom, however, was strangely silent, and Madge, content with her own dreams, did not attempt to make conversation. She would perhaps have been a few degrees happier could she have been in the despised livery cart behind, but then Estelle and he were such old friends she could afford to sacrifice to the former one hour of her new-found happiness.

The other pair were silent, too, but that was nothing unusual. For the first time in all the years of their friendship, dating back to knee-skirts and pigtails for Estelle, and freshman days for himself, Kemp did not know what to say to her. He had flirted and danced through his college days with other girls, but through it all

Estelle had never failed to receive a weekly scrawl, and underneath their easy-going chumship had been the unacknowledged thought that they would go through life together.

Kemp graduated at the law school and came back to Norwood to practice. Estelle lived with an aunt in the same town. Neither was bound by home ties, and they were much together. She had laughed at him, teased him, sympathized with him, but for a long time no word of love was spoken. Then it came suddenly, and they met it as they had met every other subject of mutual concern—frankly, without embarrassment.

"We can't possibly get married," Estelle had said, positively. "I haven't a penny except what Aunt Dora gives me, and she hates you. And there's no chance of your making a fortune—you are too lazy. We'll just have to be friends."

And Kemp agreed with her, reviling the while the Fates that had fashioned the circumstances that enmeshed them. Estelle and he keeping house on his income! He could imagine their old acquaintances forgetting them—imagine themselves dropping little by little from old haunts and occupations, and then growing further and further apart, bored by each other and poverty. It would never do.

This had happened nearly two years before, and the people who had lived in hourly expectation of hearing the Kemp-Lessing engagement announced had grown tired of watching, and finally lost interest in a match that moved so slowly. In the meantime, the two most concerned went serenely on their way, and until very recently it had not seemed that anything would occur to jar on their quiet relationship. It was of all this Kemp was thinking now as he sat surveying his companion with moody eyes. His gaze wandered from the small, well-poised head down to the long, slender, ungloved hand lying in her lap. What capable-looking hands she had! What an extremely satisfactory companion Estelle was, any-

way! She always appeared to understand him—never asked too many questions or put him in a disagreeable position. How different—pshaw!

"Estelle," he said, abruptly.

"Well?" She was not looking at him, and there was a tired sound in her voice. It was a very rare thing for Estelle to betray weariness, even if she felt it.

"I—I want to talk to you. I had an offer to-day."

"An offer? This isn't leap year. Who was the lady? She has made a mistake."

Her voice came mockingly now, and she had turned a little toward him.

"Nonsense! I am not trifling. I had a letter from a Western corporation. There is a great deal of business to attend to, and it means life in a small town in Nevada. They offer me a fixed salary that, if not precisely princely, would enable me to pay my board bills, and there would be no Country Club dues."

"Are you going to accept?"

"I hadn't decided. It is that I wish to talk over with you now."

"And the alternative?"

"Is to marry Madge Morris."

"So I supposed."

"Your powers of observation haven't deteriorated."

"Humph! It would hardly have taken a clairvoyant to read her face to-day. I knew the moment you came up on the piazza that you had proposed and been accepted. A girl is usually easy to read just after her first proposal."

She spoke quietly—so quietly as to appear indifferent—but she felt thankful that the rapid sinking of the sun permitted her to sit back in shadow.

"I hardly think I ought to defend myself, Estelle. We had agreed on this thing long ago, but it never seemed that I should be the first to break our—our—friendship. I meant to leave it to you, and of course—oh, what a blundering fool I am! Estelle, it must all depend on you."

"You are too considerate."

"What do you mean?"

"Since confessions are in order—and congratulations——"

"Well?" impatiently.

"Well, I saw how things were going, and I accepted Tom Morris this afternoon. You know the part of Patience never appealed to me."

"I am damned if you did!"

"I am afraid you are, then."

"Afraid—what?"

"Afraid you are 'damned.' I certainly accepted him." And then she burst into a fit of hysterical laughter.

Kemp leaned forward and gave the horse a sharp cut with the whip, a proceeding that immediately necessitated the use of all his strength to quiet the frightened animal. An oppressive silence followed. The sun was almost out of sight and the Summer dusk was deepening about them. The regular beat of the horse's hoofs on the shell road and the occasional croak of a frog were the only sounds. They were within a half-mile of home, but Kemp deliberately turned into a road leading in a nearly opposite direction.

"It is probably the last time together," he said, "and we might as well stay longer. Mrs. Audrey won't worry about you, and there is no one interested in my doings."

Estelle had stopped laughing and leaned back wearily. She looked white and tired in the dim light.

"Estelle," he said, "is this all? Must this be the end?"

"I suppose so," faintly. "We shall live near together and see each other often, and be very proper and right and moral, and people will say, 'There was nothing in that old affair, after all. See how easy they are.' But—but this is our real good-bye."

"Estelle! For God's sake, hush!"

He held the reins loosely in one hand and with his free arm drew her to him so close that she could feel the fierce beating of his heart.

"Estelle—sweetheart—I can't give you up—I can't!" and he covered her face with wild kisses. "Don't you see we have made a mistake? By heaven! if I thought that any other

man would kiss you as I have, I should kill him—kill him!"

She drew herself away, trembling and half-crying.

"Oh, it isn't right; I know it isn't. Why did you do it? We played a deuce game this afternoon, we four, and now—" again came the hysterical laughter.

"Now," he finished, grimly, "we are playing the deuce."

The cart made another quick turn, and Kemp drew out his watch, peering at it in the dim light.

"What are you going to do?" asked Estelle, anxiously.

"We are going to elope." He laughed like a schoolboy. "It is just 7.30; at 8.07 the New York express stops at Norwood Junction. We shall get into the city by ten o'clock and be married. Thank your lucky stars, Estelle, that you live in a State where no license is required."

"And then—Aunt Dora and—and—all the others?"

She was still trembling—very different from the ordinary Estelle, who scorned to be ruled and laughed at sentiment.

"We will send Mrs. Audrey a note from the station. The horse and cart will have to go back. I am not thinking of right or wrong now, only of you, my darling—my darling!"

Twenty minutes later Kemp entered the dingy little waiting-room where Estelle sat huddled in a corner, her hat pulled over her eyes.

"I have settled everything," he said. "A boy will take the horse back, and I sent a line to your aunt saying you had gone to spend the night with a friend. The train will be here in a moment—and, Estelle, I have telegraphed to Nevada that I will be out next month. We will take an orthodox wedding trip, and I can come back here after the first of July and wind up things—after the first," he repeated, in an uncertain sort of way.

Estelle did not notice. She rose and walked to the door in silence. Then she turned and gave him a

searching look. The boyishness had vanished and his eyes were more tired and discontented than usual. The change jarred on her already over-charged nerves.

"Oh, I can't go—I can't!" she gasped. "Please take me back."

The roar of the incoming train almost drowned her voice, but the sudden flash of light showed her face white and imploring.

For reply Kemp lifted her bodily up the steps and into the car. "Don't make a scene," he said, almost roughly, and then, more gently: "It's too late to go back now, Estelle—we must make the best of each other."

Her lips framed a protest, but the shriek of the whistle made the words inaudible. An instant later they were rushing along in the Summer night together.



IN CHURCH

JUST in front of my pew sits a maiden,
On her hat a little brown wing
That has touches of tropical azure
In the luminous sunlight of Spring.

Through the bloom-colored pane shines a glory
By which the vast shadows are stirred;
But I pine for the spirit and splendor
That painted the wing of the bird.

The organ rolls down its great anthem,
With the soul of a song it is blent;
But for me, I am sick for the singing
Of one little song that is spent.

The voice of the curate is gentle—
"No sparrow shall fall to the ground"—
But the little limp wing on the bonnet
Is mocking the merciful sound.

Close and sweet is the breath of the lilies
Asleep on the altar of prayer;
But my soul is athirst for the fragrance
That greeted the bird fastened there.

Oh, I wonder if ever or never,
With white wings o'er-weary and furled,
I shall find the sweet spirit of Pity
Abroad in this pitiless world.

CHELSEA CURTIS FRASER.



PRECAUTIONARY PREPARATIONS

MRS. TOWE—What do you need with those dark-colored shirt waists in the country?

MISS UNDA TOWE—Why, ma, won't there be any young men up there to sit in the hammock with evenings?

LES FLEURS QUI SE FANENT

Par Henry de Forge

Aix-les-Bains, 16 août, 1901.

A MONSIEUR EDMOND DANTON :

L m'arrive quelque chose d'extraordinaire, mon bon ami, quelque chose qui bouleverse toutes mes théories et tous mes projets. Malgré mon très vif désir de t'aller voir, malgré l'attrait des perdreaux et des lièvres de tes plaines, malgré la joie charmante de bavarder avec toi sous les grands arbres de ton parc, je suis retenu ici par ce que je vais tâcher de t'expliquer. Tu ne m'en voudras pas, j'en suis sûr, en apprenant que ce sont des raisons de cœur, presque d'amour.

Je t'ai dit souvent, te souviens-tu, que je ne me marierais jamais, parce que je suis trop difficile.

C'est absurde, la beauté n'étant pas indispensable ici-bas, surtout en matière d'affection. Mais que veux-tu ! j'ai cette idée en moi, depuis longtemps, que je ne pourrais jamais épouser qu'une femme parfaitement belle.

Je n'avais jamais rencontré l'oiseau rare de mes rêves.

Souvent j'allais dans les musées passer de longues heures devant les toiles des maîtres, cherchant à trouver dans leurs fictions une forme précise pour mon idéal, à découvrir les lignes exactes de la perfection.

L'existence prosaïque, hélas ! ne me fournissait que des jeunes filles bien différentes de ces tableaux, toujours gâtées par un nez trop long, une bouche trop petite, des mains affreuses.

Or, depuis hier, mon bon ami, je crois avoir trouvé. Je dirai même plus ; j'en suis sûr. Il ne s'agit pas d'un tableau du Louvre dont un être humain incarnerait imparfaitement l'image poétique, mais de tous les

tableaux de tous les peintres du monde entier réunis en une seule figure, impeccable.

Un rêve quoi, un rêve fait de la beauté de toutes les femmes, un rêve que la nature sut animer, faire sourire et faire chanter.

Je l'aime déjà à en mourir.

Où l'ai-je rencontrée ? Comment la chose a-t-elle eu lieu ? Je n'en sais plus rien. Je crois que c'était au Casino, avant-hier. Avec qui était-Elle ? Je l'ignore et ne veux même pas le savoir. Son fin profil se dessinait dans l'ombre perdue d'une baignoire de théâtre. Je n'ai rien voulu connaître de plus. Je l'ai contemplée pendant deux heures, sans être vu, et j'ai vécu de son souvenir depuis ce temps.

Hier, je l'ai retrouvée. Tu me diras que je la cherchais. Peut-être !

Comme, le soir, je me promenais mélancolique dans les avenues désertes du parc, j'entendis une voix douce chanter.

Je ne sais pourquoi, dès cet instant, j'eus la certitude que pareille voix ne pouvait appartenir qu'à mon incon nue ; au détour d'un bosquet, à l'extrémité du jardin, son cher profil m'est apparu une seconde fois, dans l'encadrement d'une fenêtre, plus beau encore s'il est possible qu'au théâtre, avec le charme nouveau de sa chanson.

En conscience, puis-je venir te voir ?
À toi de cœur,

JACQUES.

II

Valjoli (Indre), 18 août, 1901.

À MONSIEUR JACQUES MAURIN :

Certes non, mon cher, tu ne peux

pas venir me voir. Reste auprès de ta belle. Aime-la de toutes tes forces et de toute ta vie, si elle en est digne, de toute ta folie si elle ne l'est pas. Je vous donne ma bénédiction.

Mais laisse-moi te confier une objection, peut-être vaine, qui m'est venue à l'esprit: Elle m'effraie un peu, cette beauté impeccable dont tu me parles. Les femmes trop belles sont bien dangereuses, car on leur donne le maximum de tendresse dont est capable le cœur humain. Et quand, à la longue, quelquefois tôt, quelquefois tard, toujours pourtant, cette beauté vient à se faner, n'y a-t-il pas une désillusion plus douloureuse, une peine plus grande?

Au fait, je me mêle là sottement de tes affaires. Ton inconnue n'a probablement pas du tout envie de se faner et peut-être la verras-tu toujours avec les yeux de ton amour.

À toi,

EDMOND DANTON.

III

Aix-les-Bains, 20 août, 1901.

À MONSIEUR EDMOND DANTON:

Ne t'inquiètes pas, mon bon ami, je serais désespéré d'être le mari d'une femme qui ne sût pas être belle toujours, et l'objection dont tu me parles serait parfaitement juste, si je n'étais pas complètement sûr de ma petite Béatrix.

Elle s'appelle Béatrix. Je le sais. Le hasard s'est entremis avec beaucoup de gentillesse. Je l'ai revue, figure-toi, à un *garden party* donné par une vieille dame que je connais ici. Quelle stupéfaction lorsqu'on m'a tout à coup présenté à cette jeune fille!

Elle s'appelle Béatrix Villiers. La mère est veuve, et d'une famille des plus honorables. Elle était là avec sa sœur, personne plus grave et moins jolie. Chez cette sœur, les traits se sont accentués, la bouche si petite de Béatrix s'est élargie sans grâce. Elle ne vaut pas sa cadette. Peu m'importe, puisque c'est la cadette que j'aime et que je compte épouser! Oui,

épouser; la chose est possible. La situation de fortune me convient et la dame chez qui nous étions, prise par moi pour confidente, a promis de s'employer.

Nous nous recontrons demain chez elle; à l'heure du thé je serai présenté à la mère, que je ne connais pas. Me voilà l'homme le plus heureux du monde, comme Béatrix est la plus belle femme de toute la terre.

TON JACQUES.

IV

Aix-les-Bains, 26 août, 1901.

AU MÊME:

Je suis ennuyé, mon bon ami. On dirait que tu m'as porté guigne avec tes théories l'autre jour. Ne ris pas de moi; je suis extraordinairement agacé et c'est absurde.

Je viens de rencontrer Béatrix et sa mère chez cette dame dont je t'ai parlé. J'ai passé là une heure divine. Rien ne manquait, fleurs, coucher de soleil au-dessus des montagnes et reflets mourants sur le lac du Bourget.

Je crois bien que je ne suis pas indifférent à cette jeune fille et si les choses continuent, nous ne tarderons pas à parler mariage officiellement.

Or, sais-tu ce qui me préoccupait? J'avais en mémoire tes fameuses objections et je ne cessais de regarder la mère de Béatrix. Madame Villiers est une femme de trente-neuf ans, c'est-à-dire pas vieille encore et pourtant elle est loin d'avoir la beauté de sa fille.

Et ce qui m'effraie, c'est qu'elle lui ressemble singulièrement. Elle devait être son portrait frappant il y a vingt ans, mais dans ces malheureux vingt ans elle est devenue une caricature. Tout ce que j'adore en Béatrix se retrouve à l'état de défaut chez sa mère. La petite bouche s'est empâtée, les grands yeux se sont bouffis et le nez, le nez surtout, qui est si délicieux chez la jeune fille, est abominable chez sa mère.

J'avais déjà remarqué du changement chez sa sœur aînée, qui avait dû être fort belle, mais qui, de cinq

ans plus âgée, était déjà presque laide.

Je me demande ce que sera Béatrix dans dix ans.

Il y a de quoi se moquer de moi, n'est-ce pas? mais je t'assure que cela m'a gâté la visite. J'ai justement vu dans un album le portrait de Madame Villiers mère à dix-huit ans. C'était un amour. Est-ce possible que si peu de temps puisse transformer ainsi une femme? J'ai peur, mon bon ami, conseille-moi.

JACQUES MAURIN.

Je regardais cette dame chez qui nous étions, belle encore à soixante-cinq ans, un vrai portrait de Marquise Pompadour, sans une ride et avec d'admirables cheveux blancs. De telles femmes ont dû rester belles toute leur vie, qu'en penses-tu?

V

Valjoli (Indre), 1 septembre, 1901.

À MONSIEUR JACQUES MAURIN:

Je suis désespéré, mon bon ami, d'être la cause involontaire de tes ennuis. Qu'importe le visage de Madame Villiers mère? Ce n'est pas elle que tu épouses, morbleu! Et puis, il faut te dire que toutes les femmes n'ont qu'un temps. Le bonheur que tu auras pendant ce temps-là compensera l'ennui de la voir vieillir.

Quant à ta Marquise Pompadour, elle me laisse assez sceptique, car elle a pu être fort laide jadis. Cela s'est vu. La beauté n'est pas éternelle. Elle vient souvent de bonne heure, quelquefois fort tard; l'essentiel est qu'elle soit venue. Calme tes scrupules, prends en affection Madame Villiers, qui doit être une excellente femme, et aime sa fille de tout ton cœur.

EDMOND.

VI

Aix-les-Bains, 3 septembre, 1901.

À MONSIEUR EDMOND DANTON:

Ah! mon ami, j'étais soumis, archi soumis, prêt à suivre tes bons conseils,

décidé à oublier ces craintes puériles, mais vraiment le destin s'acharne après moi. Juge plutôt! je suis tout à fait bien avec les Villiers, qui me reçoivent chez eux le mieux du monde, et je passe même officieusement pour candidat à la main de Béatrix. Cela se chuchote dans Aix-les-Bains.

C'est au point qu'on a eu l'idée admirable—sais-tu de quoi?—de faire venir, sous un prétexte, la grand'mère—oui, mon bon, une respectable aïeule, côté maternel. J'ai eu l'honneur de lui être présenté tantôt. C'est une alerte vieille de soixante-huit ans, très aimable, et qui m'a fait force compliments.

Mais ce qui m'avait ennuyé chez la mère m'épouvante chez la grand'mère. Elle aussi a dû être, à vingt ans, le portrait de Béatrix. Quelle ruine aujourd'hui! Je n'aurais jamais cru que les traits d'un être humain puissent s'altérer de la sorte.

Trop physionomiste peut-être—j'ai ce malheur—je passe mon temps à comparer ces trois femmes, ces quatre même, puisque la sœur aînée fait partie de la série. J'ai suivi la progression constante. Dans cinq ans—dans vingt ans—dans quarante ans! L'enlaidissement à petites journées.

Et dire qu'aujourd'hui Béatrix est dans tout l'éclat de sa beauté. Réponds-moi vite.

TON PAUVRE JACQUES.

VII

Par dépêche.

À MONSIEUR JACQUES MAURIN:

Épouse, mon ami, épouse. Qu'importe demain? Les plus belles fleurs n'ont qu'un matin de vie.

EDMOND.

VIII

Aix-les-Bains, 7 septembre, 1901.

À MONSIEUR EDMOND DANTON:

Tout est fini. Je n'épouse pas. J'ai été lâche. J'avais fait le rêve chimérique d'une beauté qui durerait tou-

jours. Ce que tu me dis n'est possible qu'avec les beautés médiocres.

IX

Celle-ci est trop parfaite, je souffrirais trop. Je pars pour toujours d'Aix-les-Bains. Je vais chez toi pour oublier.

JACQUES.

Par dépêche.
À MONSIEUR JACQUES MAURIN:
Je t'attends, mais tu n'es qu'un sot.

EDMOND.



THE CITY SLAVE

HERE in the city street,
Through tumult, glare and heat,
Through the endless strife and din,
Come songs of Summer, who waits
An idler without the gates
And who will not enter in.

And I, her worshipper,
May see no more of her
Than glimpse through the blurred pane gives—
Over pave and brick, the high,
Exquisite blue of her sky,
To tell me she laughs and lives.

I hunger for a sight
Of her region of delight,
Of her widespread, free demesne;
For the touch of winds that wing
Through the bloom and blossoming
Of the lands where she is queen.

Once, like a messenger,
Came a swift breeze from her
That whispered: "Hear and rejoice!
She bids thee arise and speed
And follow the path I lead—
She calls thee with my voice.

"Oh, follow, follow me—
My way is to the sea,
To the gold of sun-warmed sands;
Where the long waves curl and break
Waits Summer for thy poor sake,
With flower-laden hands."

I, who am pulse and part
Of the crowded street and mart,
Alas, can I heed or turn?
Oh, Summer, as one accurst,
For sight of thy smile I thirst—
From my chains I lean and yearn.

JOHN WINWOOD.

THE ERROR OF HER WAYS

By May Austin Low

THE affair began in the little Chambly Church near the syringa trees.

It was a Sunday morning in early June, and the air was so slightly stirred by the breath of the West that there was not a ripple on the lake, that lay clear as a mirror in the sun, reflecting the glory of the green shores and the dark blue mountains in the distance.

There was an unusually large congregation in the little church, accounted for by the beauty of the day and the interest in the new clergyman, who had only the week before taken up his abode in the old red-brick rectory; and last, but not least, by the appearance there of pretty little Mrs. de Freyne who, with her husband, had taken "The Wigwam" by the Rapids for the Summer months. At least half a dozen lorgnettes had discerned her tall figure crossing the old parade ground, and she might have been drilled by the way she carried herself.

Mrs. de Freyne had been shown by the pompous verger into one of the high, old-fashioned pews, and had paid due attention to the prayers and psalms, but when it came to the sermon her thoughts wandered.

The new clergyman was a success as regards earnestness and eloquence. He preached of the joys of Paradise with a heavenly light illuminating his features and the conviction that the truth that came from his soul must enter the hearts of his audience.

There were some young girls stirred to momentary ardor by his address, and the men admired his fire and fervor. The well-dressed women lis-

tened languidly; the Paradise they longed for was one that would restore their lost youth and make them once more attractive to men.

But to Mrs. de Freyne, so vividly conscious of her youth and beauty and the power thereof, the discourse had merely a musical rhythm that made a pleasing accompaniment to her thoughts. She thought of the little cottage by the Rapids, with its broad veranda and swinging hammocks and sweet flowers; of the hedge of roses in the garden, and a volume of Swinburne's poems she had been reading after breakfast. She thought of a new frock of pure white silk with gauze trimmings, which had arrived for her the night before, and in which her husband had said she looked like a water lily—a very nice thing for him to say; men aren't often poetical to their wives.

She was wondering what on earth she should do with herself after a week if there was no one to amuse her, when a man on the other side of the aisle caught her glance. Instantly she was another being.

There was no danger of dulness now, for instantly she knew, with woman's infallible intuition, that he admired her. She wished she hadn't dressed so dowdily—all in black, as if afraid of trusting her discrimination in colors. But then black set off her dead-gold hair, and the crimson poppies in her hat were an effective bit of coloring.

Was he looking at her still? She would just glance at him once again to find out. She was not disappointed.

At that moment the clergyman brought his sermon to a close; the

collection was taken up by the pompous verger, a hymn was sung with much heartiness, the blessing given in solemn tones, and Mrs. de Freyne found herself among the society few that lingered last.

"What did you think of our service?" asked a middle-aged woman with a distinguished air, stepping across the aisle to shake hands with her, while the young man she had noticed followed them closely down the church.

"Quite charming," said Mrs. de Freyne, as if passing a verdict on a new novel. "I enjoyed the sermon greatly, and—and everything."

"You must let me introduce my cousin to you," said Mrs. Wentworth, turning as they reached the steps to the young man in their wake. "It isn't often that he is lured to church, but the new clergyman attracted quite a large congregation."

The young man bowed low, and answered, with a slight smile: "It isn't often one has anything so attractive as—our new clergyman."

"I'll make you a frightful confession," said Mrs. de Freyne, as he followed her through the gate. "I think clergymen the most unattractive of all things created. Why should there be so much strength about a doctor's appearance and so much weakness about the men who preach the Gospel?"

"It's perhaps the way they look at things," said Arthur Wentworth. "Of course, a clergyman is in a hard position. No better, by nature, than other men, he has eternally to think of setting a proper example."

"Men take things so much more seriously than women," she said, reflectively; "I suppose that is why a man is content to appear what he is, while a woman wishes to be considered either better or worse than she may be."

"Which is your desire?" he asked, with a strange smile, looking down at her yellow hair.

"Oh, I pose as a saint, of course. I'm a model wife—I should have been a model mother had nature permitted. As it is, I have a little dog that I adore.

It's quite a case of love me, love my dog; and anyone that Snap doesn't approve of I doubt at once."

"It isn't exactly an encouraging name—to the timid of heart. Was he christened after his character was formed—or from prognostication?"

"Come, now, I thought men were never ill-natured. Wait till you see my little angel, and your conscience will smite you."

"And when may I see him?"

"Your cousin is coming to call on me to-morrow; if you really wish to see Snap—" hesitatingly.

"I might come with her to-morrow—and *afterward*?"

"Oh, that would depend on Snap's approval of you."

She laughed a gay little laugh, without any guile, giving him a glimpse of perfect teeth and a delicious dimple near her mouth.

"You see, I'm never lonely on Sunday, because Samuel is with me—Samuel is my husband," she explained; "but the rest of the week is a dull affair unless people take pity on my loneliness."

"Are you fond of boating? I brought a boat from Montreal."

"I love the water." She came to a standstill between the barracks, where she could see the quiet lake beyond the foaming Rapids. "This is an ideal place for a Summer holiday. Why did I never come here before?"

"Why not, indeed? Before you had Snap—or . . ."

He paused, and she knew as well as did he what he had left unsaid. She took no umbrage, but laughed merrily. The dimple at each corner of her mouth was certainly bewitching.

The man found himself wondering why another man's wife should always be so very attractive—if attractive at all. Was there magic in the marriage service?

He walked with her to the little gate leading to "The Wigwam" and turned to take off his hat a second time as she disappeared across the broad veranda.

Samuel was ensconced in a huge

rattan chair on the side overlooking the Rapids. He was smoking a very good cigar and reading a very bad book.

"Oh, you wicked boy!" exclaimed his wife, alluding to his cigar, for she affected to disapprove of anything stronger than a cigarette.

Her tone pleased him. It is soothing to a man's feelings to be called a boy when he is on the wrong side of forty, just as a woman revels in being addressed as "my dear child" when she has forgotten what it is to feel young.

"You survived the service?" he queried, taking her slender hand in his fat, gigantic palm.

She thought of Arthur Wentworth's hands, which showed clearly an artistic temperament.

"Well—rather! Such an entrancing sermon, and the dearest little church! The leaves rustled outside the open windows and sounded like whispers from heaven."

"The parson said nothing more poetical than that, I'll be bound."

"It didn't strike me that there was anything particularly poetical about *him*," she mused.

"But you said his sermon was entrancing."

"Oh, I was thinking of someone else. I've become acquainted with two members of Chambly society—a Mrs. Wentworth and her cousin, Arthur Wentworth."

"I knew a Chambly Wentworth a very long time ago; his name was Sydney—a fine fellow he was, too—and my father knew his father before him, and his grandfather, too—William and Thomas by baptism." He was somewhat proud of his memory for names as well as faces.

"And Thomas begat William and William begat Sydney and Sydney begat Arthur—and really it seems to me he was worth *begatting*."

"Your frivolity, Aimée, is limitless." He smiled adoringly up into his wife's fair face, for her frivolities were very dear to his stolid soul. "Well, my dear, you can amuse yourself with this boy when I'm not here—"

the old conditions—"but these boys bother me; they are like puppies, always getting in the way."

"We find anyone in the way when we two are alone," she said, in a cooing voice. She pushed a footstool toward his chair and sat at his feet, with her elbows resting on his knees and her face in her hands. "What a bore business is, Samuel, dear! Couldn't you sometimes let it slide?"

"Then where would your pretty frocks come from? No, my dear, we must keep sentiment for Sundays—but by all means let us have it then——"

A bell sounded, and they went in to dinner, hand in hand, like children.

In a country place, with few women and fewer men as inhabitants, there is always more or less gossip over the doings of one's neighbors. Larger places, of course, have their character side-lights, but the focus of a primitive village is far more searching and severe.

The de Freynes had not been in Chambly more than a month before public attention was riveted on the wife's flirtation with Arthur Wentworth. If he walked over to "The Wigwam" and spent the morning on the shady veranda, in the glow and glory of her blue eyes, the fact was sure to be known all over the place before dinner time.

And as he spent many mornings undisturbed, it at last dawned on them that someone in the community ought to interfere. But who? Her rightful protector, if he was aware of the state of affairs, made no sign. Who, then, could be better chosen for such a mission than the paid protector of their souls?

So the little clergyman was interviewed, the case laid before him, and his clerical conscience so disturbed that he ate no breakfast and presented himself at "The Wigwam" gate just at dinner time, as deplorable looking an object of humanity as could be well imagined. Mrs. de Freyne came forward on the veranda and stood awaiting him, looking the

embodiment of health and happiness, her fine figure, in its stainless white frock, outlined against the dark green leaves.

"You have come at last," she said, as if his coming had been hourly longed for, "and at the right time, too. I had just persuaded Mr. Wentworth to partake of my dinner of herbs, and you must join us. Then, at least, we shall be sure of the presence of brotherly love."

"You—er—are very good," he said, feebly. He hadn't come to tell her that; but what a delicious aroma there was of salmon and cucumber! And he had eaten no breakfast.

They went immediately into the dining-room, where dinner was served on fine and faultless damask, and a jardinière full of freshly culled cabbage roses stirred the senses with delight. The two French windows were thrown wide, and not only the sound but the sight of the *Rechelieu Rapids* added to their enjoyment.

"I verily believe I'm greedy!" cried Mrs. de Freyne, gaily, helping the Rev. William Chester to a second slice of salmon.

"Here I am with two men for dinner—and how many cavalierless tables there must be in *Chambly* to-day! I might have sent over for one of the *Westover* girls, but Mr. Wentworth declares he doesn't like bread-and-butter misses. As for you, Mr. Chester, I know you have the charity that covers a multitude of—women, and it wouldn't matter to you whether a girl had red hair and a random eye, or—the form of a *Hebe*."

She looked at him round the cabbage roses with bright and mocking eyes.

"I pride myself on my appreciation of the beautiful," said the Rev. William, with some dignity, having found that salmon is good for the spirit. "I don't maintain that godliness is by nature allied to ugliness, but while the beauty of the body may satisfy the senses, the soul sees deeper beneath the flesh that fails, and is never satisfied until——"

"That's it," interrupted Mrs. de

Freyne; "the soul, they say, is never satisfied, and I'm an example of *Carlyle's* theory that there is no such thing as a feminine soul; I am always satisfied, and I can't imagine anyone being happier than I when I've a new dress or a new book, or——"

She paused, and Arthur Wentworth said, with a dubious smile:

"A new victim to your charms."

He departed as soon as the dinner was over, and the little clergyman had the field all to himself.

They went out on the veranda, and she made him take the big rattan chair, while she sat at his feet on the edge of the veranda, leaning her head against the tall pillar, with her hands clasped across her knees and a very amused expression in her bright blue eyes.

"Now," she said, "you have a chance of making your enemy your footstool."

Undoubtedly he blushed. Had she already defined what he had to say?

"My dear lady," he said, "do you wish to be my enemy?—or the enemy of anyone?"

"Not yours, perhaps; but really, enemies are interesting, and it's everything—everything to be amused."

"We look at life from a different standpoint. It is everything to be good. I am convinced," he went on, with that clerical contraction of the larynx so irritating to the laity, "that the mistake people make is in not recognizing the danger in little things. The fascinating beginning of a flirtation, for instance, before you go any further——"

"Is it a sermon?" queried Mrs. de Freyne, with a slight arching of her eyebrows and a brilliant smile. "Before you go any further do tell me how you came to know of the fascination of beginnings?"

But the little clergyman was in earnest. He felt the woman's personal magnetism even as he reprimanded her—knew that her subtle feminine wit could outdo him at every turn; and yet he went on, because he had a soul to save and believed in his mission.

"It's quite funny," she said, "and perhaps not quite nice to be told you are not good; it really makes one wish to be—naughtier."

She pulled to pieces a huge Virginia vine leaf as she spoke.

"Hush!" he exclaimed. "You are taking what I have to say quite wrongly. I would only ask you to abstain from the appearance of evil."

"What would you have one do? I do my duty by my husband—even you must admit that. I darn his socks—such big ones I sometimes have to finish them on Sunday—I keep his cupboards tidy, I sort his ties, I cut his papers, I make his coffee and keep his house charming. What more do the soul-savers of this community desire of me?"

"That you do not spend hours alone with a man who is not your husband."

"And I maintain that it is no one's business but my own and my husband's."

"Which means——?"

"That you make a great mistake in preaching out of the pulpit."

Then she came down from her dignity and coldness and gave him a cup of tea sweetened with three lumps of sugar, as an offering of peace, she explained, which he accepted and sipped humbly, though he hadn't had sugar in his tea since he left off bibs and tuckers, and abhorred it.

But when he was leaving he leaned over the little gate and took up the old theme for a brief moment.

"I pray you to consider my words——"

"And I haven't considered *you*! Here I have been allowing you to risk your reputation by spending more than an hour alone with me."

As the little clergyman walked across the Common he thought to himself: "Surely a woman with eyes like hers must have a soul!"

Matters came to a climax one day when Samuel arrived by an earlier train than usual and found "The Wigwam" deserted, save for Snap, who had overturned the pink jardinière in his displeasure at being shut

in the dining-room, and Philomene, the pretty French maid-of-all-work, who had the natural leaning toward excitement innate in her race, and who thought it was time the jealous husband should appear on the scene. So she met her master's inquiries with enough explanation to set his smouldering jealousy ablaze.

Madame had gone out with Monsieur Wentworth soon after dinner. He used to come and be content to sit on the veranda and smoke, but lately they had always gone out. To-day they must have gone on the water, for he carried a paddle over his shoulder. If Monsieur had the opera glass perhaps he could find out. And the next moment Samuel was scanning the water for his recreant wife.

What he saw or did not see was sufficient at least to keep him tramping up and down the veranda till an hour later, when his wife came, with wind-tossed hair and shining eyes, to greet him. But he waved her away, and gave her no chance to vindicate herself by words. So she stood silently by one of the broad pillars, with tightly clasped hands and strange eyes, till he had said what he had to say.

"I'll have an end of this at once. No shilly-shallying now, Aimée. You cut the fellow direct, or—I'll know the reason why. You choose between him and me. You'll have leisure to decide while I'm away, for I'm going back to town now, and shall return to-morrow night." There was a whistle at that moment from the incoming train, and snatching up his handbag he hurried off toward the station. Mrs. de Freyne's mind had been made up from the first moment. She had grown to abhor her husband. A man may have half a dozen flirtations, and yet be more than content with his wife—as his wife; but no woman tolerates her husband when she has a penchant for another man.

Hadn't Arthur said over and over again how he loved her—how he would die for her? Now he should know he had only to live for her.

She enjoyed writing the note to him explaining the state of affairs. It

was a picturesque and intense moment. She wrote eagerly at a little rustic table on the veranda, while the sound of the Rapids filled the air and the perfume of the cabbage roses stole on her senses.

In the morning she sent the note by her maid, who delivered it safely into his hands.

Then she busied herself with preparations for departure. She had told him to meet her at the old Fort at four o'clock that afternoon. No one would think it strange for them to be going for a row at that hour, and how easily they could go across the lake in his boat and take the train at Bel-œil!

Waiting for him at the old Fort even before the appointed hour she could see him coming in the distance. He wore flannels and carried a fishing basket over his arm.

"How well he dissimulates!" she thought, devouring him with her eyes. Even at that distance the sight of his physical beauty stirred her oddly.

It was only when he had sprung into his boat and pushed from shore that the truth struck her—he was going La Cache fishing. What an answer to her impassioned note!

She cowered in the shadow of the

old Fort wall, that he might not see her; but when at last she retraced her steps homeward she was not unobserved.

A pretty little married woman to amuse one during Summer hours, with dainty dinners served for two within sound of the Recheleu Rapids, and always that husband as the impassable barrier and safe dividing line—was quite different from the pretty little woman as a fixture. And so he had torn her note to pieces and turned his attention to his fishing tackle.

When Samuel got to "The Wigwam" that evening he found a pale and penitent wife awaiting him, who tearfully threw herself into his arms.

"Darling, I've decided—he—he was all very well to—to flirt with—but as a husband you alone are the man I can love," she said.

Samuel kissed her tenderly and lovingly, and his pride in his wife was considerably augmented when a little later they met Arthur Wentworth on the Common, and she gave him the cut direct.

The little clergyman, who was also passing at the moment, offered up a thanksgiving from his heart that she had been brought to see the error of her ways.



NIGHT IN THE CITY

NIGHT, weary raven, worn but watchful still,
Gathers beneath her wings the world of men.
The selfish brood despoils her peace, until
The patient mother flies away again.

FRANK WALCOTT HUTT.



SOCIAL OBLIGATION

LITTLE ELMER—Papa, why is it more blessed to give than to receive?
PROFESSOR BROADHEAD—Because, my son, if you permit yourself to receive you are compelled to give about three times as much in return in order to properly express your gratitude.

PAQUITA, THE DANCER

By Mrs. Maraquita Bangs

SLENDER as a reed, lithe as a willow, restless as a wind-blown flower, with purple shadows in the beautiful eyes, a crown of blue-black hair softly shading the low white brow, crimson mobile lips that smiled at you and at the same time drew a sob into your throat—that was Paquita. Half of London was raving about her—that half which seeks ever the new star, the professional beauty or the latest sensation.

The last night of the opera at Covent Garden had drawn a splendid audience. The boxes and stalls fairly blazed with color, and the animation of the women in their décolleté gowns was accentuated by the flashing of jewels as their wearers chatted in restless expectancy. All London seemed to be represented. In the gallery, in the pit and in the stalls, one name was on every tongue—Paquita. The music of the opera was barely heard. The artists entrusted with the leading rôles received only perfunctory recognition. Everyone waited for the ballet and the incomparable Paquita.

Lord Merivale and his beautiful wife occupied a proscenium box. He had represented the borough of Langley for nearly twenty years, and he was looked on in the House of Commons as the coming leader of his party. His steadfastness of purpose, his oratorical ability and his unimpeachable morals made him a power. Lord Cowardin, their guest, a handsome man of thirty or thereabouts, made no effort to conceal his impatience to see again the bewitching Paquita. Lady Merivale smiled with middle-aged indulgence at his enthu-

siasm. In her estimation, ballet dancers were not real persons; they were simply essential if extraordinary effects, belonging in the category with the Gilded Dragon and the Fountain of Golden Rain.

Lord Merivale stood behind his wife's chair, hidden from the view of the audience by heavy velvet curtains. Tall and dignified of bearing, his hair tinged with gray, his face calm and handsome, he looked an ideal leader of men. He, too, was waiting and watching for Paquita. Could his wife have looked into the deep-set gray eyes she would have been startled. This serious man with the weight of fifty years on his strong shoulders was struggling with turbulent memories of the scenes of his youth. He saw another Paquita. Against his will he recalled the sweet, pleading face of her, that other, the mother of this new danseuse for whom he and the eager crowd were waiting. One by one reminiscences of that far-off time of youthful folly ranged themselves in startling tableaux wherein he and that other Paquita were the leading figures.

When a young man, and while sojourning in Paris, he had followed the fashion and paid court to the beautiful danseuse then the reigning queen of the ballet. She, ignorant and untrained, had flung all the love of her passionate nature at the feet of the young Englishman. Then a dream of folly lasting many months came to an end. Lord Merivale returned to England to begin his career and to marry the fair Isabel, daughter of the Earl of Marden. He left with his bankers in Paris a large sum

of money to be used by the danseuse for the maintenance of the little Paquita, born two weeks before his departure, and whose advent the young mother had hailed with delight. She had been sure, then, that he would never leave her, impractical mother of Paquita! Born of heaven knew whom, she could not understand her lover's desertion. She beat out her young heart against the relentless problem of woman's love and man's perfidy, and died leaving the little Paquita to the care of her old dancing master, and commending her to the keeping of Mary, the Mother of God.

The discreet lawyers who managed the affair for Lord Merivale informed him twice a year, as a matter of business, of the whereabouts of the little Paquita, but he had never thought it wise or necessary to see her. On this last night of the opera, however, he had yielded to the pressure of his friends and to a latent interest to see this living link to his past. The ballet music began, and a bright red burned on the brow of the dignified Member of Parliament. In his heart was something like fear. His wife leaned back to speak to him. "Is it not pitiful to see so much excitement over a dancing woman? Will the people ever be serious?" she asked.

Lord Merivale's answer was lost in the tumult of applause that greeted Paquita as she daintily pirouetted toward the footlights. He strove to conquer the conflicting emotions that the sight of the lovely dancer raised in his breast. Her beauty appealed to him; her apparent fragility awoke an unwelcome feeling of pain; a certain air of reserve, a more than hint of high breeding about her, smote him with reproach, and he trembled at a new suggestion of responsibility. The witchery of her smile caught him, and his cool, stout heart leaped with admiration. A longing to cry out aloud that the radiant creature was his child possessed him. His self-control nearly forsook him. The red in his brow spread from cheek to chin. Shame flung out her dusky banner. The

folly of the past now assumed the aspect of a crime. He shrank back into the shadow of the velvet curtains.

Lord Cowardin stood up, heedless of decorum, and greatly to Lady Merivale's discomfiture, shouted "Brava!" There was a recognizing flash from the dark eyes, and Paquita vanished from the scene. The Earl of Marden with one or two friends entered the box. The old man was florid and moist with excitement. "Begad, I have never seen her equal!" he said, as he took the chair Lord Cowardin had vacated. "Merivale, you will be forever in my debt. If I had not insisted you would not be here, and you would not have seen Paquita!"

"I am going to the green-room to say a word of congratulation," Lord Cowardin interjected, and to his intense surprise, the staid Member from Langley rose to join him, saying, "Yes, I, also, must see her!"

The enthusiasm from the theatre was bubbling over into the green-room. Lord Merivale paused at the entrance. His self-consciousness almost forced him to retreat; but the notes of a flute-like voice floated toward him and held him there in helpless confusion. He struggled to maintain an appearance of the dignified calm he did not feel; but the melting cadence of the girlish voice, that even in merriest chatter carried a hint of tears, made his effort at self-control only partially successful. It awoke in him an importunate need, an almost unquenchable thirst for recognition. He tasted the agony of denied fatherhood. The crowd of men, young and old, began to disperse, and Lord Cowardin, who had mingled with them, beckoned to Lord Merivale.

As he was introduced the young girl gave him her hand. He grasped the slim fingers and held them for a moment, struggling to find some trivial word to say. The effort failed. Presently he released the little hand; but he knew that he should bear its impress forever on his heart. Lord Cowardin noticed his perturbation, and misunderstood. He immediately

assumed a possessive attitude, which he intended should enlighten Lord Merivale.

Paquita was conscious of the strangeness in the manner of her new acquaintance; but breaking two rosebuds from a bouquet lying near, she said, archly: "I hear the music beginning for the next act. You must permit me to decorate you before you go."

She stood first before Lord Merivale to fix the bud in the lapel of his coat. Lord Cowardin smiled cynically as he looked at the picture they made—the girl tall and slim in her gauzy skirts and pink fleshings, standing before the stalwart, dignified Member for Langley. As for Lord Merivale, he needed all his strength of will to refrain from taking the fair form in his arms and claiming his own. It was the supercilious smile on Lord Cowardin's face that brought him to a realization of what he was contemplating. He found strength to say, however, "You do me too much honor," and bowing stiffly, he moved toward the door.

Paquita, embarrassed, turned toward Lord Cowardin. She held the flower up and was about to place it in his coat.

"No, no," he said. "Give it to me as a token." He kissed her hand as she blushing complied. There was an expression of such absolute faith in her eyes as she turned them full on Lord Cowardin's face that for the moment he was startled. Brusquely, almost, he shook hands with her, saying, as he did so, "To-morrow."

Paquita, bewildered, watched his going, her mobile lips parted with surprise. She recovered quickly, and clasping her hands on her heart, she said, softly: "He loves me! He does love me!"

Lord Merivale sat in the library of his club, looking worn and ill at ease. His equilibrium was not yet restored, nor was its restoration aided by the entrance of Lord Cowardin. He beat a tattoo on the table with his long white fingers, and his face was pale and set. It was evident, as Lord Cowardin threw himself into a chair,

that he, too, was chagrined about something.

"Do you know," he began, rather petulantly, "do you know that little Paquita is a consummate actress?"

"Is she?" Lord Merivale returned, as his face grew a shade paler.

"Yes. I called on her this afternoon, early. I had made arrangements to take her for a little trip to Paris, and went to tell her so. I broached the matter with great skill, I thought. She seemed not to understand at first."

An awful fear showed on Lord Merivale's face as he listened, but he waited for Cowardin to continue.

"It was all pretense, of course," he went on, presently. "At length, however, she did understand what I really meant, and then, by Jove, instead of behaving sensibly, she acted—well, as if she were a person of some importance—told me I had insulted her and all that sort of thing—talked of honor and all that, you know. She was perfectly impracticable. I want to help her, of course. The trip would benefit her."

Lord Merivale sat with murder in his heart; but his respectability, his reputation and the situation made him afraid.

"I took my hat to leave," Lord Cowardin continued, "believing that she was making a scene for her own profit, when she flung herself on a couch and began to weep violently. I had seen that sort of thing so often, you know, that I came away. I shall see her again. She is too beautiful and too clever! Besides, I really can help her. She interests me."

Lord Merivale did not move or speak. The sin of his youth was holding him by the throat. Lord Cowardin, unconscious of the effect of his words, rose to go, and as he passed Lord Merivale he leaned over his shoulder in a youthful, patronizing way. "I really beg your pardon," he said, "for boring you with my foolish affairs. I ought to have remembered that such things are caviare to you. We shall meet at Marden Court this evening. *Au revoir!*"

As Lord Cowardin left the room, Lord Merivale rose to his feet, and striking the table with his clenched hand, cried: "Caviare? Damn you, this is hell! burning hell!" Then he added, with an air of resolution: "I must save her from that, and I will!"

The dinner at Marden Court that evening was almost a family affair. Lord and Lady Merivale and Lord Cowardin, who was a great favorite of the old Earl, were the only guests except the Honorable James Danesfield, one of the Ministry and an old friend of Lord Merivale. The old Earl was in good humor, and told stories of the time when he was a lieutenant in the Scots Fusiliers, and of the hot work they had in quelling the Indian Mutiny. He reveled in reminiscences of Cawnpore and Delhi. The more recent wars in Abyssinia, Zululand and the Soudan were small affairs, in his estimation. The dinner was nearly over when a chance remark of Lady Merivale about the opera dismounted the Earl from his hobby.

"Music, begad!" the Earl exclaimed. "I don't believe I heard a note of it. It was that little dancer! Did you ever see such dancing? Danesfield, you should have seen her; perhaps you did, though?"

"No," he began, with the deliberation that had led them to call him "Dribble" in the House—"no, I do not frequent such places. I think,

however, I saw something about the young person you allude to in this evening's paper as I came down in the late train. The name was a foreign one, 'Paquita,' I believe."

"Yes," the old Earl returned, unctuously. "Paquita is her name. What was it the paper said?"

"It was about her, I imagine. It appeared from the headlines that she destroyed herself this afternoon!"

Lord Cowardin started and wiped his face with his handkerchief.

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Earl of Marden. "Are you sure?"

"I am sure the paper said she was dead. I did not read the particulars. Details of that sort are not to my liking."

"Nor to mine," said Lady Merivale. "Those people are doing something shocking always. They are abnormal, and really out of the pale of ordinary sympathy."

Lord Merivale trembled like a man with ague. He reached for a glass of wine, but his shaking fingers succeeded only in overturning the glass. The wine flowed across the table in a blood-red line between himself and Lord Cowardin, who sat opposite.

Lady Merivale, noticing the accident, remarked with wifely solicitude to the Cabinet Minister: "Really, you know, I think Merivale has been working too hard. I shall be glad when Parliament adjourns, so that we may get away to the Riviera."



FORTUNATE IGNORANCE

BIBBS—No man knows himself.

GIBBS—That's so. He would lose his best friend if he did.



FRIENDLY INTEREST

GRACE—Why do you persist in repeating that awful scandal about Lucy?

MAY—I'm trying to find out if there is any truth in it.

A HEAD OF PAN

By McCrea Pickering

*LEERING down on book and man
Mouths and mocks the face of Pan.*

By some master wrought and planned,
Bought and brought from over seas,
Cast in plaster by some hand
Skilled in careful mimicries;
Purchased on a city street
For a dingy coin and small,
Hung where desk and window meet
High upon my study wall.

Wrinkled brow and pointed ears,
Curly beard and sprouting horn,
And a mocking mouth that jeers
Generations yet unborn;
Grinning lips and slanting eyes,
Cunning look that fain would say:
"Fool, I knew life's master-lies
When to-day was yesterday."

Lofty dream and tender thought—
How he mocks them every one—
And the story comes to naught,
And the poem dies undone;
And I blush to meet his grin
As he counts their worth again,
Chuckling at the petty sin
Of the little pride of men.

Epicure and pessimist—
Laugh the vanity of me—
Still I struggle to resist
Spell of thy philosophy.
Some day I shall write the word,
And my heart shall know its worth,
Nor my conscious soul be stirred
At thy mockery and mirth.

Some day—"Nay, what use of it?"
So he preaches to me still;
"Who shall profit by thy wit—
Live and laugh and love thy fill!"

So a silent war we wage—
 Still he sneers and still I strive—
 And he leers at pen and page
 And at every man alive.

*Narrowed, careless sight that sees
 Through so many centuries,
 Are you right, then, after all?
 Tell me, Pan upon the wall!*



A VIRTUOSO ON GOLF

GOLF—have I tried him? *Hélas, oui, mon cher!* I have my firs' and las' experience wiz zat game. Shall I tell you how it was, *hein?* Ze morning I make ze grand play seem most propeetious, ze wind in ze green overhead sigh *dolcemente*, ze birds zey carrol *capriccioso*, and ever'-zing it was most lovely—yes. I have often watch ze play, and it seem quite *facile*, so I say, "Ha, I, too, win ze championsheep." *Eh bien!*

Full of ze sublime confeedence, I walk *allegro* through ze crowd of players to ze practice tee. *Poco-a-poco* I assume ze proper pose. Ze *maestro* he stand before me *maestoso* to give me ze instruction. He place ze ball *resoluto* upon ze tee, and I swing ze club *adagio*. "*Pianissimo!*" he caution me. "Slow back, don't press, and keep ze eye on ze ball!" I bring my club back over my shoulder *molto adagio*, and I endeavor to astonish ze audience by a drive of marvelous distance, but in ze effort to strike ze ball *furioso* I pass over him entire, and ze crowd laugh, while ze *maestro* tell me *crescendo* to keep my eye on ze ball.

Resoluto I again draw my club back *poco largo* and once more I strike, but zis time *rallentando*, topping him and sending him just off ze tee. Ze crowd laugh again, and my heart beat *furioso*, and I swear ze great cuss word.

"*Poco-a-poco*, you will get him," say ze *maestro, dolcemente*, and I try him again—several time I try him. I bring my club down *stringendo* and pass over zat ball as if he was not zere.

Ze *maestro* he lose his temper, ze same as me. *Con tutta forza*, "Be sharp and keep ze eye on ze ball!" he exclaim, while I answer, *expressivo*, "I have no luck!" *Resoluto* I once more draw my club back, zis time *poco più allegro*, and aim at ze ball *molto furioso*, but I miss him altogezzer, yes, while ze force of ze grand stroke whirl me around and I fan ze air *a tempo*. Ze *maestro* say *andantino con sentimento*, "Try again." "Never!" I say, and I pitch ze club *con strepito* into ze lake. Zen ze crowd it cheer, but zere was no encore, no. Zat golf, ah, *mon Dieu!* I have no more of him!

ROWENA NEW BURFORD.



CHASING THE FOXY

SHE—Is your friend going to marry the widow?
 HE—I think not. He told me he had a better offer.

NAMING THE NOVEL

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO WELL-KNOWN AUTHORS

By Livingston Hunt

HENRY (*condescendingly*) — My dear lady, I want you to give me an idea in return for the many I have given you. I am writing a story, and can't, for the life of me, think of a title for it. Can you help me?

EDITH—What is the story about?

HENRY—I really don't know. I am half through it, and there are some elusive human beings in it—ghosts of men and women; and there is an English country house with a host and hostess who are never seen, and there is also a splendid description of a single idea which runs through ninety-two pages and leaves you exactly where you began.

EDITH (*musings*)—Are there any characters in it who—pardon the vulgarity of the thought—who work for a living?

HENRY (*hastily*)—Good heavens, no!

EDITH—Then why don't you call it "The Hand of Little Employment?"

HENRY (*pleased*)—Thank you, my dear lady; you are coming on. But your suggestion leads to another even better. Why wouldn't "The Daintier Sense" be a charming name for a story? It bears no particular relation to anything in the book, and will do splendidly. I'll take it.

EDITH—I think it would not be exactly fair to take that title, for it smacks too much of me. You mustn't forget that I have a very pretty knack in comparatives and superlatives, and I don't want you to interfere with it. Have you forgotten my story of "The Baser Hope," and of "The Spine of the Least Consistence?"

HENRY (*paternally*)—My child, you

need not worry yourself with the idea that anyone will ever be reminded of you when they pick up ME. Besides, it is hardly grateful in you to find fault with anything I do in the literary line. Only recall to mind the circumstances of your progress up the difficult steep of authorship, and then remember whose hand it was that helped you.

EDITH (*subdued*)—You are right, and I am deeply indebted to you, for are you not my Sacred Fount? Take any title you like for your book, and I shall have no right to object. But I, too, am writing a story, and like yourself, I need a name. What would you suggest?

HENRY—The opposite of what it stands for. That is, provided it stands for anything. (*Confidentially*) Does it?

EDITH—I am not quite certain. It began with real human beings, with a touch of flesh and blood about them, though not enough to hurt. Their emotions are very feeble, yet they take themselves very seriously.

HENRY (*alarmed*)—Do you mean to say there is a central idea?

EDITH—Yes, there is; although, of course, it is deeply veiled. Here it is: A very clever married man thinks he would like to be very naughty, but shudders at the thought of having to make up his mind on the matter before the Autumn, when they will all go to Italy.

HENRY—"They" go to Italy? Who are "they?"

EDITH—Why, the would-be *ménage à trois à la turque*, of course, you stupid man! And the reason for the

husband's indecision and distress is that his wife is always so adorable in Italy. Italy brings her out; psychologically speaking, it makes another woman of her.

HENRY—Very pretty, but a little too definite. Can't you lose the central idea?

EDITH—I have already.

HENRY (*reassured*)—Oh, that's all right. Then call it "The Undistributed Middle."

EDITH—Lovely! Or, how would "The Minor Premise" do?

HENRY—Or "Harp and Hand," provided there is no harp anywhere in the neighborhood.

EDITH—Or "The Level of Pity," that not meaning anything.

HENRY—Why wouldn't "The Softer Shoulder" be very neat?

EDITH (*shocked*)—That is a little too—er—specific, don't you think?

HENRY—Perhaps it is. How would "An Offense Against Substance" sound?

EDITH—Certainly that is excruciatingly inapplicable, but "The Weaker Vessel" seems to me better.

HENRY (*almost with contempt*)—Too banal, and has no inventiveness, either. "The Trick of Distance" would be neater and yet vague enough; also "The Circled Square." "Mahomet's Coffin" may seem unsuitable, but if your story ends in the air and is buried there the name would apply, and at the same time its applicability would always remain your own sweet secret.

EDITH—How would "The Bloom of Age" do?

HENRY—Fair. Try again; I like to see your progress.

EDITH—Well, "The Poised Fist?"

HENRY (*frowning*)—Bad.

EDITH—How do you like "The Wincing Point?"

HENRY—Dreadful! It reminds one of the dentist's chair.

EDITH—Does "The Mesh of Circumstance" sound worthy of your tutelage?

HENRY—Stale, my dear lady, stale! You are running down. The next thing you will be suggesting will be "The Pleasant Wish," or "The Pretty Thing," or "The Nice Idea." You are disgracing me!

EDITH (*appealingly*)—I am doing my best. How would "The Shadow of a Predilection" fit the case?

HENRY (*rising impatiently*)—If you go on like that I shall begin to believe you really wrote "An English-woman's Love Letters," and good God! that is a terrible thing to say of anybody!

EDITH (*shuddering*)—Anything but that! I may be a bore, but not of *that* calibre!

HENRY (*inspired*)—Then call your book "The Wrong Gimlet."

EDITH (*fervently*)—Thank you. You have done me a real service.

(*Henry takes her hand to say good-bye, raises it to within a foot of his lips and solemnly kisses the air. He then departs. She gazes after him in adoration.*)



INDEFINITE INSTRUCTIONS

LADY (*to clerk in clothing store*)—I want a pair of trousers for my husband.

CLERK—What size, madam?

LADY—I don't know the size, but he wears a fifteen collar.



WHEN HIS LIGHT WENT OUT

RURAL YOUTH—I shall never forget the blow that killed father.

CITY MAIDEN—Was he asphyxiated?